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## THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSISTENCY OF LUTHER'S ATTITUDE TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY<sup>1</sup>

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THE development and consistency of Luther's attitude to religious liberty is still the occasion of much diversity of opinion. By some it is contended that he broke radically with an earlier liberalism. By none is a measure of change denied, but certain writers would minimize the change by insisting that Luther

<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations are used in the notes:

- A. H. R. . . . . American Historical Review.  
C. R. . . . . Corpus Reformatorum.  
C. W. . . . . Christliche Welt.  
D. Z. K. R. . . Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht.  
E. A. . . . . Erlanger Ausgabe (of Luther's Works).  
E. K. O. . . . . Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts, 4 volumes, Leipzig, 1902-11.  
End. . . . . Enders and Kawerau, Dr. Martin Luther's Briefwechsel.  
H. T. R. . . . . Harvard Theological Review.  
H. Z. . . . . Historische Zeitschrift.  
N. K. Z. . . . . Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift.  
T. S. K. . . . . Theologische Studien und Kritiken.  
W. A. . . . . Weimarer Ausgabe (of Luther's Works).  
Z. K. G. . . . . Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.  
Z. T. K. . . . . Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche.

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was essentially intolerant from the beginning, others by representing him as fundamentally tolerant to the end. Still others find him incurably inconsistent.

They all are right and all are wrong. Luther experienced a profound change, but he was not without a measure of inconsistency all along the line. In support of this view I shall first give a chronological sketch of his development in three periods, namely, from the beginning to 1525, from 1525 to 1530, and from then on to the end. This will be followed by an attempt to show that a declining hospitality to mysticism and humanism was not without bearing upon a decreasing tolerance. The last part of the article will be devoted to Luther's inconsistencies.

Nikolaus Paulus presents a one-sided picture of the early intolerance against Rome, contending that Luther was ready to put the papists to death as early as 1520. By way of proof he cites a passage in which Luther wrote:

KÜHN, JOHANNES, *Toleranz und Offenbarung*, 1923.

MURRAY, R. H., *Erasmus and Luther, their Attitude to Toleration*, 1920.

PAULUS, NIKOLAUS, *Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert*, 1911.

POINCENOT, E., *Les Idées de Luther sur la Répression de l'Hérésie* (thèse), Paris, 1901.

VÖLKER, KARL, *Toleranz und Intoleranz im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 1912.

WAPPLER, PAUL, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse in Zwickau zur Reformationszeit*, 1908.

*Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung*, 1910.

The "great surrender" is stressed by Wappler, as well as by Köhler, Völker, Burr, and Faulkner. One gains the impression of a prevailing intolerance from the beginning to the end from Paulus and Evans. Paulus talks of flagrant inconsistencies, but so plays up the early intolerance toward the Catholics that the only development appears to have been an extension of this bitterness to a wider circle. Evans remarks, "But although his fundamental theory of revealed truth and exclusive salvation was essentially intolerant, his early enthusiasm and belief in human nature obscured for a time its real character" (p. 105). The other extreme, that Luther was at bottom tolerant to the end, is represented by Hermelink and Murray. The latter finds the "Castle church at Wittenberg a place dear to the lover of tolerance," since Luther and Melancthon are buried there (pp. 65 f.). The view that Luther was inconsistent all along is represented by Kühn and Allen. Both recognize some development, but Kühn considers the earlier tolerance merely 'Geduld.' There was a constant conflict between prophetism and 'Spiritualismus.' Allen remarks that Luther must have been honest, for "very rarely, if ever, is dishonesty so inconsistent as was Luther" (*Tudor Studies*, p. 95).



If we punish thieves with the yoke, highwaymen with the sword, and heretics with fire, why do we not rather assault these monsters of perdition, these cardinals, these popes, and the whole swarm of the Roman Sodom, who corrupt without end the church of God, why do we not rather assault them with all arms and wash our hands in their blood?<sup>2</sup>

Paulus might well have added other passages in a similar vein. In the same year Luther wrote that the nobles should go to Rome and smite with the sword all who like Sylvester made Scripture subject to the pope, and declared that the pope should go unpunished though he took the whole world to the devil.<sup>3</sup> Again, in the Address to the German Nobility Luther urged that the papists be severely punished "because they have blasphemously abused the ban and the name of God and want to make us participators of their blasphemy. We are bound before God to withstand them. Paul treats as worthy of death those who do such things and those who suffer them to be done."<sup>4</sup> And a little farther on Luther declared that the emperor and nobility were bound to ward off and punish the tyranny which the bishops suffered from the pope.<sup>5</sup>

That is one side. But there is another. The next year Luther wrote to Spalatin:

All predict a revolution like that in Bohemia and that there will be an attack on our clergy. I'm not to blame, for I tried to get the German nobility to put bounds to the Romanists not with the sword but with counsels and edicts, which they easily could, for to make war on this unarmed crowd of clergy is like fighting women and children.<sup>6</sup>

In December 1521<sup>7</sup> Luther wrote:

It looks as if it might come to revolution, and the papists, monks, bishops, and clergy be slain and driven out. . . . But no revolution is to be made for God. Scripture gives the pope a very different end. He is to be destroyed without hand (Dan. 8, 25). The Lord Jesus will slay him with the Spirit of his mouth (2 Thess. 2, 8). But because it is God's affair is no reason why the magistrate should not do his part and with the sword anticipate a portion of God's anger, just as Moses allowed three thousand of the people to be slain. Not that one should slay the papists, which is not necessary, but that one should forbid them with words and restrain them by force from what they do against the gospel. One can do more than enough with words and letters. Neither hewing nor stabbing is necessary.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Weimarer Ausgabe, 6, 347.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. 6,584.18-585.5.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. 6,431.26 ff.

<sup>5</sup> W. A. 6, 433.

<sup>6</sup> End. 3,90. Feb. 21, 1521.

<sup>7</sup> W. A. 8, 673.

<sup>8</sup> I have grouped passages from pp. 676, 677, and 680.

Again in the following year Luther said:

It were better that all the bishops were murdered and all the endowments and cloisters rooted out than that one soul should be corrupted, let alone all.<sup>9</sup>

Yet I won't destroy you with the sword. You are not worthy of such a punishment, but, as Daniel says, "Antichrist shall be destroyed without hand."<sup>10</sup>

A series of similar utterances from the years 1522 and 1523 has been collected by Preuss.<sup>11</sup> Paulus rightly takes him to task for treating Luther as tolerant from beginning to end,<sup>12</sup> but to pass over these passages entirely is not telling the whole story.<sup>13</sup>

How these conflicting statements are to be reconciled is another question. Some of Luther's bluster was merely for effect.

Almost all [he wrote] condemn me for being so biting. . . . But I see that things which are handled quietly in our day soon fall into oblivion and nobody cares. . . . The present age takes it ill, but the judgment of posterity will be more favorable. Paul called his adversaries dogs, concision, ministers of Satan (etc.). . . . But these terms are hackneyed and don't get under any one's ribs any more.<sup>14</sup>

Frequently, however, Luther's virulence was the lava of an entirely unpremeditated eruption.

I am a preacher [he wrote] but if I were a subject of the Turk and saw my lord in danger I would forget my ministerial office and light in.<sup>15</sup>

He forgot all too often. Nevertheless it is only fair to record that for the major portion of 1520 to 1523 the crater was quiescent.

Equally unfair is Paulus' treatment of Luther's attitude to the Jews. The intolerant utterances of 1543 and 1546 alone are cited. But in 1523 Luther could ask:

<sup>9</sup> W. A. 10, II, 108, 1522.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 140.

<sup>11</sup> H. Preuss, *Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik*, 1906, p. 165, note 2.

<sup>12</sup> Page 16, note 2.

<sup>13</sup> Preuss' references are here given according to the latest editions. End. 3, 312, March 17, 1522; 3, 330, April 12, 1522; 3, 342, April 17, 1522; 3, 406, June 27, 1522; E. A. 53, 143, July 10, 1522; End. 4, 227 f., September 7, 1523; Op. v. arg. VII, 2, comment End. 4, 260, before December 4, 1523.

<sup>14</sup> End. 2, 463, August 19, 1520.

<sup>15</sup> W. A. 18, 398.29 f., 1525.



What good can we do the Jews when we constrain them, malign them, and treat them as dogs? When we deny them work and force them to usury, how can that help? We should use toward them, not the pope's, but Christ's law of love. If some are stiffnecked what does that matter? We are not all good Christians.<sup>16</sup>

It is not to be denied, however, that Luther in this period was perfectly willing in a measure to anticipate the divine anger in curbing Antichrist. The only question was as to the measure. He was clear that the clergy might institute reforms, the magistrate might suppress abuses, but the mob should say its prayers. Luther had occasion to formulate his judgment on all of these points while still at the Wartburg. When, in October 1521, the Augustinians discontinued the mass, Luther commended their courage, while reminding them to show consideration for the weak;<sup>17</sup> but when on December 3 a mob of students and citizens broke into the parish church, snatched the mass-books from the altars, and expelled the priests with stones, Luther was not at all pleased, and after his return to Wittenberg expressed himself strongly.<sup>18</sup> It was well enough to have abolished the mass, but it should have been done in orderly fashion, that is, by the magistrate.<sup>19</sup> Luther did not propose the restoration of it,<sup>20</sup> but had he seen the papists celebrating he would have preached against them instead of dragging them by the hair.<sup>21</sup> Private masses should be given up, but

Don't tear the priests from the altar. Tell the people to withdraw financial support, and with such preaching the masses will in time fall of themselves.<sup>22</sup> Show consideration to the weak.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> W. A. 11, 336.22 f., condensed. Luther's whole attitude up to this tract is given by Lewin Reinhold, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden* (diss.), Breslau, 1911.

<sup>17</sup> W. A. 8, 411 and 476. The preface was ready November 1, 1521. On the whole question of the suppression of the mass at Wittenberg see Karl Müller, *Luther und Karlstadt*, I-III, cf. Tiling, 'Der Kampf gegen die Missa Privata in Wittenberg im Herbst 1521,' N. K. Z. 20, 1909. Nikolaus Müller, *Die Wittenberger Bewegung 1521 und 1522*, 2nd ed., 1911, gives some valuable material for the events of 1524.

<sup>18</sup> In the Eight Sermons. W. A. 10, III, 1-64, March 9-17, 1522. We have these only in the report of Aurifaber, but Luther worked them over in 'Von beider Gestalt des Sakraments zu nehmen.' W. A. 10, II, 11-41, April 1522.

<sup>19</sup> W. A. 10, III, 9.31 f.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 17.20 f.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 18.4 f.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 32, condensed.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 20.31.

There are people who pray to the sun, moon, and stars. Shall we therefore pluck them out of heaven? . . . Wine and women make fools of many. Shall we therefore prohibit wine and despatch women?<sup>24</sup>

In a word I will preach, speak, write, but I will force and drive no one, for faith must be willing and unconstrained.<sup>25</sup>

Christ taught that we should use only the Word. Then all will fall of itself.<sup>26</sup>

These principles, if consistently applied, would have excluded any activity on the part of the magistrate, but Luther was too ingenious to be hampered by logic. Already in 1520 he had declared that the magistrate was not the custodian of the first three commandments. Nevertheless a son should restrain a crazy father.<sup>27</sup> In the tract in which he congratulated the Augustinians on the cessation of the mass in the cloister Luther reminded them that there was still a house of idolatry in the castle church at Wittenberg, but he hoped the Elector Frederick would be the Frederick Barbarossa who should deliver the Lord's sepulchre.<sup>28</sup> There followed repeated appeals to the prince himself to put in his hand.<sup>29</sup> Let him at least suppress those masses for which he was financially responsible,<sup>30</sup> a request which implied that he might suppress others as well. He was to act not merely as patron, but as magistrate.

But Frederick would not act; so Luther directed his appeals to the clergy of the castle church. Weakness had received sufficient consideration, he declared. The gospel had been set forth so clearly that boys, girls, and blockheads could understand. His conscience would not suffer him to be silent for the credit of his ministry. Then follows a threat of the ban.<sup>31</sup> The clergy asked for grace until the coming of the new dean. On his arrival Luther again wrote:

Enough patience. You cannot plead that the prince commands or does not command to do or not to do. I am talking to your conscience. What has the prince to do with such matters?<sup>32</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 33.21.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 18.28 f.

<sup>26</sup> W. A. 10, II, 37.

<sup>27</sup> W. A. 6, 258 f.

<sup>28</sup> W. A. 8, 475.20 f.

<sup>29</sup> Through Spalatin. End. 3, 250, November 22, 1521; End. 4, 46-47, before December 25, 1522; End. 4, 53 f., January 2, 1523. Evans is wrong in his comment on 'Vom Greuel der Stillmesse,' 1525, when he says, "Coercion is not, it must be clearly understood, to be applied by the hand of the prince."

<sup>30</sup> Utinam istas missas saltem Princeps intermitteret, quas quotidie e Camerae stipendio alit. End. 4, 54.

<sup>31</sup> End. 4, 89 f., March 1, 1523.

<sup>32</sup> Erlanger Ausgabe, 53, 178 f., July 11, 1523.



A flagrant inconsistency, according to Paulus, for had not Luther just been appealing to the prince?<sup>33</sup> The discrepancy, however, is only verbal. The prince might check an abuse whether the clergy liked it or not, but the clergy might institute a reform whether the prince liked it or not. Luther did not recognize the right of the prince to hinder the reform, and when the elector feared that he had not done enough at Wittenberg,<sup>34</sup> Luther told him bluntly that he had done altogether too much.<sup>35</sup> There were further negotiations with the clergy and the elector.<sup>36</sup> Luther, in a sermon on August 2, declared that he would not use force, but nevertheless waxed so hot that Roth stopped taking notes,<sup>37</sup> and on August 19 he wrote to the clergy telling them that all fee-masses should be abolished, whether the people recognized them as a sacrilege or not.

Not all the prophets of Baal under Josiah believed their rites to be impious, but Josiah paid no attention to that. It is one thing to tolerate the weak in non-essentials, but to tolerate in matters clearly impious is itself impious.<sup>38</sup>

Some changes were made with the consent of the elector, but in November Luther heard that the mass had been given in one kind only, contrary, as he believed, to the agreement. He at once informed the clergy that they were possessed of the devil. They must stop this tomfoolery, else he would make them act, whether they liked it or not. Let them answer yes or no before Sunday.<sup>39</sup> The dean and two of his adherents tearfully informed the elector that they feared a tumult of the people: they would however follow his orders.<sup>39a</sup> But Luther received no answer; so on Sunday week (November 27), despite an appeal from the prince to practise what he preached,<sup>40</sup> Luther instead preached what he practised, calling on princes and other magistrates to stop this dreadful blasphemy.

<sup>33</sup> Page 5.

<sup>34</sup> End. 3, 292.13, end of February 1522.

<sup>35</sup> E. A. 53, 107, March 5, 1522. Cf. K. Müller, *Kirche, Gemeinde u. Obrigkeit*, pp. 25 and 27.

<sup>36</sup> See End. 4, 176 f.

<sup>37</sup> W. A. 12, 647 f. See Buchwald in T. S. K., 1884 and 1885.

<sup>38</sup> End. 4, 211, condensed.

<sup>39</sup> End. 5, 54, November 17, text in E. A. 53, 269.

<sup>39a</sup> Seckendorf, *Commentarius historicus de Lutheranismis*, 1694, I, p. 276.

<sup>40</sup> C. A. H. Burckhardt, *Dr. Martin Luthers Briefwechsel*, p. 76, November 24.

If it is allowed by God to punish a reckless scamp who blasphemes in the market-place, it is also permitted to drive this horrid antichristian blasphemy out of your town.<sup>41</sup>

As a result representatives of the university and city authorities urgently besought the clergy to abolish the mass, informing them that a priest who celebrated it was worthy of death.<sup>42</sup> Since this gentle suggestion went unheeded, the same dignitaries announced that they would have no further communion with the clergy, if they did not stop. The mob smashed the windows of the dean's house,<sup>43</sup> but the mass continued until the clergy declared themselves convinced.<sup>44</sup> This has been described as suppressing the mass by force.<sup>45</sup> Immoderate pressure would be a more precise term.

We may sum up Luther's attitude to the Catholics during this period by saying that in his sober moments, at least, he objected to taking their lives. He was opposed to mob violence, would have the magistrate confine himself to the elimination of abuses, and would leave the work of positive reformation to the clergy. At the same time Luther indulged in incendiary utterances likely to inspire the very lawlessness which he deplored.

Luther's early liberalism toward the sectaries is so well recognized, even in the Catholic camp, that I can confine myself to a brief review of the outstanding utterances.

Luther had once approved of outward compulsion in matters

<sup>41</sup> W. A. 15, 774. The sermon is based on the notes of a hearer, but Luther worked it over and said practically the same thing in *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse*, W. A. 18, 36.

<sup>42</sup> Walch, 19, 1453.

<sup>43</sup> Seckendorf, loc. cit.

<sup>44</sup> Luther to Amsdorf, "*Canonicos nostros perpulimus tandem, ut consentiant missas esse abrogandas*"; End. 5, 80, Dec. 2, 1524. The dean of the smaller choir informed the elector on December 24 that he had learned by daily investigation that the mass was indefensible; Nikolaus Müller, *Die Wittenberger Bewegung 1521 und 1522*, p. 257. The clergy as a whole recognized that the said abuses are a horrid blasphemy; Walch, 19, 1457-58. The sources for the whole incident are reviewed in the introduction to *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse*, W. A. 18, 8-11.

<sup>45</sup> Theodor Kolde, *Friedrich der Weise und die Anfänge der Reformation*, 1881, p. 35, "nicht ohne Vergewaltigung." Paulus, p. 8; Burr, 722; Evans, 114. Professor Burr writes me that he thinks his language was "too unqualified." His kind suggestions have led me to revise my own expressions.



of faith,<sup>46</sup> but when he was himself accused of heresy he began to criticize the burning of heretics.<sup>47</sup>

Is it not astounding [he wrote in 1518] that they should childishly try to terrify people with bodily fire when they are themselves subject to hell fire and eternal death for their false interpretation of Scripture?<sup>48</sup>

Again in the defense of the ninety-five theses he complained:

It pleases us not to destroy heresy and error, but to burn heretics and those who err. We are guided rather by the counsel of Cato than of Scipio for the destruction of Carthage, and go counter to the will of the Spirit, who wrote that the Jebusites and Canaanites should be left in the land of promise to give the Israelites exercise in war. . . . This refers to the heretics.<sup>49</sup>

In the Address to the German Nobility we read:

If heretics were to be overcome with fire, the executioners would be the most learned doctors on earth. We need not study any more, but he who could get the better of the other might burn him up.<sup>50</sup>

Two years later Luther hoped that Frederick would not imbrue his hands in the blood of the Zwickau prophets.<sup>51</sup> The tract on Civil Government of 1523 set forth in thorough-going fashion the spiritual and inward character of faith, which cannot be judged or forced by outward means. Constraint merely leads the weak to deny their convictions. It would be better to let them err than to force them to lie.<sup>52</sup> In 1524, writing to the elector with regard to Münzer, Luther advised him to let the spirits fight it out. If some are lost, *c'est la guerre*. "They are not Christians who besides the Word resort to fists, be they filled to overflowing with ten Holy Ghosts."<sup>53</sup>

The only disputed point in this period is the banishment of Carlstadt from Saxony in 1524, of which Luther approved. Barge calls this a brutal transgression of liberty of conscience.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>46</sup> W. A. 12, 600.38. See Burr, 720, note 7; Evans, 104, note 14; cf. W. A. 40, 1, 138. 1-2 and 13-15.

<sup>47</sup> The connection is emphasized by Paulus, p. 25, note 3, and Burr, loc. cit.

<sup>48</sup> W. A. 1, 391.35-392.3, June 1518, condensed.

<sup>49</sup> W. A. 1, 624.35-625.5, June 1518.

<sup>50</sup> W. A. 6, 455.22-25, August 1520, p. 392.

<sup>51</sup> End. 3, 286, January 17, 1522.

<sup>52</sup> W. A. 11, 263.7-265.3.

<sup>53</sup> E. A. 53, 265-268, August 21, 1524.

<sup>54</sup> Carlstadt, II, 139.

Karl Müller replies, and I think rightly, that in Luther's eyes Carlstadt was not expelled as a false teacher, but as a disturber of the peace like Münzer.<sup>55</sup> The fact that Luther was mistaken in his charges does not affect the ground upon which he based his opinion.<sup>56</sup>

There was to be no action against the sectaries before 1525. That year brought two important changes. One was the Peasants' War, or rather the war plus Münzer, for here was a glaring example of religious radicalism issuing in social revolution. The other change was the death of Frederick and the succession of John, who was much readier to employ stringent measures on behalf of the Evangelical cause. Luther was not slow with suggestions.

If the endowed clergy at Altenberg request the restoration of their former unchristian ways, turn them down. . . . I know your Grace is well informed and well inclined through God's grace, yet I cannot refrain from reminding your Grace.<sup>57</sup>

To Spalatin Luther wrote:

You ask whether the prince should suppress the abominations, since no one is to be forced to faith, and the power of princes extends only to externals. Answer: our princes do not compel to faith, but merely suppress external abominations. Princes should prohibit public crimes such as perjury, manifest blasphemy of the name of God, and the like, without considering whether the culprits believe or not, or whether they curse in private.<sup>58</sup>

Only two years before, Luther had complained that the Catholics attempted to judge anything so inward as faith, while recognizing that *de occultis non judicat ecclesia*.<sup>59</sup> His own formula, that no one can be compelled to faith, was now rendered equally innocuous. In the Eight Sermons he had urged consideration for the weak, but now one must beware lest the plea of weakness be merely a cover for wickedness.<sup>60</sup> The mass must be abolished, not gilded with a glittering reformation.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Luther und Karlstadt, 178.

<sup>56</sup> For the charges and a criticism of them, see W. A. 18, 93 and 138 and notes.

<sup>57</sup> E. A. 53, 324, July 20, 1525.

<sup>58</sup> End. 5, 271, November 11, 1525, condensed.

<sup>59</sup> W. A. 11, 264.6-7.

<sup>60</sup> 'Schwachheit,' 'Schalkheit.' E. A. 53, 393, 1526.

<sup>61</sup> W. A. 19, 443.7-10, probably composed in 1525, but not published until 1526.



The prince should see to it that the endowed clergy at Altenberg either stop entirely or else conduct their rites in private. One reason is that the prince is the financial patron, but another is that in one place there can be but one preaching to avoid disturbance of the peace.

If they appeal to conscience, that won't help. Conscience must be instructed from Scripture. If they object that they are forced to faith, that's not the idea. Public offence alone is forbidden them. They may stay in the land, and in the privacy of their rooms pray to as many gods as they like.<sup>62</sup>

This last generous concession was apparently what enabled Luther to write two months later:

No one can be a papist without being at least a murderer, robber, and persecutor, for he must approve of the burning, banishing, and persecution. If one judges the tree by the fruits, it is abundantly clear who are the true Christians. We do not kill, banish, and persecute anybody who teaches other than we do. We fight with the Word of God alone. If they don't want it, we let them go and separate ourselves from them and let them stick to any belief they like. We do the best we can toward them and let them live among us, but on the pope's head will come all the innocent blood shed since the days of Abel.<sup>63</sup>

But Luther had enunciated the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, which does not long survive without banishment. The elector introduced it the next year for the laity as well as for the clergy who erred on the sacrament or otherwise.<sup>64</sup> A year later Luther was ready with his consent. To Link he wrote:

You ask whether the magistrate may kill false prophets. I am slow in a judgment of blood even when it is deserved. In this matter I am terrified by the example of the papists and the Jews before Christ, for when there was a statute for the killing of false prophets and heretics, in time it came about that only the most saintly and innocent were killed. . . . I cannot admit that false teachers are to be put to death. *It is enough to banish.*<sup>65</sup>

Banishment was beginning to look liberal, for things were moving fast. Six months earlier the elector had suppressed the writings of the Anabaptists and Zwinglians, and all unauthorized assemblies even for a wedding or a baptism, on pain of imprisonment.<sup>66</sup> Luther did not protest.

<sup>62</sup> E. A. 53, 367. To the elector, February 9, 1526, condensed.

<sup>63</sup> W. A. 19, 263, April 1526, condensed.

<sup>64</sup> Sehling, E. K. O., I, 143-144, June 16, 1527.

<sup>65</sup> End. 6, 299, July 14, 1528, condensed.

<sup>66</sup> Wappler, Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse, Anhang 1, Nr. 1, cf. pp. 8-11.

Yet in the Visitation Articles of this year there was a slight survival of the older liberalism in that the weak might be allowed for a time to receive the sacrament in one kind only, since no one is to be forced to faith.<sup>67</sup> And to the death-penalty Luther still strenuously objected.

It is not right and I am deeply troubled [he wrote with regard to the Anabaptists] that the poor people are so pitifully put to death, burned, and cruelly slain. Let every one believe what he likes. If he is wrong, he will have punishment enough in hell fire. Unless there is sedition one should oppose them with Scripture and God's Word. With fire you won't get anywhere.<sup>68</sup>

The very next year appeared the imperial edict of the diet of Speyer, whereby the Anabaptists were condemned to fire and sword without previous ecclesiastical examination.<sup>69</sup> We have no immediate comment from Luther, but he was tightening up. In August he recommended that everybody should be compelled to attend church on the ground that politics and household economy are taught in the decalogue and catechism. Those who wish to live in the land must learn the laws.<sup>70</sup> By the beginning of March 1530 Luther gave his consent to the death-penalty for the Anabaptists, but on the ground that they were not only blasphemers, but highly seditious.<sup>71</sup> The implication is that blasphemy alone would not call for the death-penalty. In June he recommended that the seditious, who rush into the temple and blaspheme, should on a second offense receive the penalty of sedition.<sup>72</sup> Here blasphemy seems to constitute the sedition. In August he was pleased with the rumor of the execution of Campanus.<sup>73</sup> In the Exposition of the Eighty-second Psalm in the same year blasphemy is put

<sup>67</sup> Melancthon composed the articles, but the provision was included on Luther's recommendation. End. 6, 170; W. A. 26, 185 and 214; Sehling, E. K. O. 1, 159.

<sup>68</sup> W. A. 26, 145.22-146.7.

<sup>69</sup> April 23, 1529. Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse*, 56.

<sup>70</sup> End. 7, 150 and 151, August 26, 1529; cf. E. A. 54, 253, September 14, 1531, where banishment is the penalty for failure to learn the catechism.

<sup>71</sup> 'Seditiosissimi'. End. 7, 236, to Menius and Mykonius commending their plan to write against the Anabaptists. When the work appeared, Luther wrote a preface, W. A. 20, II, 211 f., but neither Luther nor Menius is specific as to penalties. Menius' tract is in the Wittenberg edition of Luther's German works, 1551, vol. II, pp. 299b-301a.

<sup>72</sup> End. 7, 357, June 1.

<sup>73</sup> End. 8, 163, August 3.



on a par with sedition.<sup>74</sup> Nothing is said definitely as to the punishment, but death was almost certainly intended, for Luther had long recognized it as the current penalty for blasphemy.<sup>75</sup> A direct appeal is made to the example of Moses, who commanded blasphemers to be stoned.<sup>76</sup> Luther was now no longer deterred because the Jews persecuted the true prophets. That's no reason for not stoning the false.<sup>77</sup> The executioner should dispose of unauthorized preachers even though orthodox.<sup>78</sup> It is not likely that the unorthodox would fare better, however authorized. Nor is the distinction between heresy and blasphemy of any moment for liberalism. It served merely to relieve Luther of any scruples in persecuting. He had said too much about the futility of treating heresy with the sword to feel altogether comfortable about it. Not so with blasphemy. It is of interest, by the way, to note what it was that now constituted blasphemy, namely the rejection of an article of faith, clearly grounded in Scripture and universally accepted like the Apostles' Creed.<sup>79</sup>

In this tract Luther was becoming aware of the implications of *cuius regio eius religio*. The alternative was an abandonment of the missionary principle or religious war. Luther contemplated both. Here he was sportsmanlike enough to tell his ministers that they must keep out of papist and heretical territory.<sup>80</sup> The next year he wrote:

I won't counsel war. That's not my office, but if the bloodhounds want it, self-defense is not seditious.<sup>81</sup>

Any doors which Luther might have left open in this second period from 1525 to 1530 were closed by Melancthon in the memorandum of 1531. Rejection of the ministerial office is insufferable blasphemy, and destruction of the church is sedition against the ecclesiastical order, punishable like other sedition. Luther added his assent, "for though it seems cruel to punish them with the sword, it is more cruel that they damn the minis-

<sup>74</sup> W. A. 31, I, 207.33 f.

<sup>75</sup> W. A. 6, 229.7, 1520; cf. Völker, 91, Paulus, 36, note 4.

<sup>76</sup> W. A. 31, I, 209.4 f.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 213.19 f.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 208.11 f.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 212.4.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 211.11 f.

<sup>81</sup> W. A. 30, III, 282, 1531.

try of the Word, have no certain teaching, and suppress the true, and thus upset society.”<sup>82</sup> Where now was the distinction between false teaching and sedition? The distinction between heresy and blasphemy, already illusory, disappeared altogether in the memorandum prepared by the Wittenberg theologians and signed by Luther in 1536. The magistrate was called upon under the second commandment to suppress open false teaching, improper worship, and *heresy*.<sup>83</sup> Luther himself took the initiative in treating absence from church as blasphemy, to be met with the threat of banishment and excommunication.<sup>84</sup> In 1536 he had come to regard imprisonment and death as preferable to banishment, which simply spread the infection elsewhere,<sup>85</sup> and in 1538 he himself revised the Visitation Articles, omitting the passage which gave consideration to the weak.<sup>86</sup>

After this there was not much to be added except a few tart remarks, which Luther liberally supplied. As for the Catholics he wished that there were more English kings to kill cardinals,<sup>87</sup> and was pleased with a rumor that bishops had been executed in Denmark.<sup>88</sup> The year before his death he raked together such a pile of gutter-muck in the tract, “Against the Papists at Rome,” that he was himself compelled to halt: “I must stop, *ich mag nicht mehr in dem lästerlichen, höllischen Teufelsdreck und Stank sudeln.*”<sup>89</sup> He could afford to stop, after having already expressed the hope that the princes would rise up, destroy the papal state, tear out the tongues of pope and cardinals, and nail them to the gallows like seals on a bull.<sup>90</sup> And after having stopped he still went on to say that if he were the emperor, he would tie up together the blasphemous pope and cardinals and take them not more than three miles from Rome to Ostia, where he would not drown them, as Paulus states, but give them a bath of half an hour in the Tyrrhenian sea, a precious bath of salvation; and that, he guaranteed, would clean them up.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>82</sup> C. R. IV, 739-740; Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse*, 61-62; Paulus, 41-43.

<sup>83</sup> W. A. 50, 11.32-12.2.

<sup>84</sup> End. 9, 365, 1533.

<sup>85</sup> E. A. 55, 140, June 4.

<sup>86</sup> See note 67.

<sup>87</sup> End. 10, 275, beginning of December 1535.

<sup>88</sup> 1536; see Paulus, 18.

<sup>89</sup> E. A.<sup>1</sup> 26, 181, 1545.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 208. I have used the first edition, not having had access to the second, which Paulus used.



To the sectaries he was no milder. He could not make merry over the discomfiture of the Swiss (in which Zwingli lost his life), because their teaching had survived.<sup>92</sup> Let them be banished from the land.<sup>93</sup> Rather die than receive the sacrament at their hands.<sup>94</sup>

I'd rather be burned than be at one with Stenkfeld (Schwenkfeld), Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Carlstadt. They call us names, but if I call them by their proper name, they would be a blasphemous heart and a lying mouth, in the devil and through the devil and by the devil.<sup>95</sup>

When Forschauer of Zürich sent Luther a Bible, he replied that he did not care to receive any more presents from those who were taking souls to hell.<sup>96</sup>

Against the Jews Luther belched forth a mass of sulphurous irreconcilable recommendations.

Burn the synagogues; take away their books, including the Bible. They should be compelled to work, denied food and shelter, preferably banished. If they mention the name of God, report them to the magistrate or throw *Säudreck* on them. Moses said that idolators should not be tolerated. If he were here he would be the first to burn their synagogues. If they want to follow Moses, let them go back to Canaan. I'd rather be a sow than a Turkish emperor or a Jewish Messiah, for a sow fears neither hell nor the devil.<sup>97</sup>

Yet there are those who discover a few flowers of tolerance which escaped the sulphur in this later period. I fear they are largely illusory. Luther, of course, never failed to protest against papal persecution. Of that I shall speak further on. But he did not on that account mitigate his own. Allen would find a survival of liberty in the preface to the Shorter Catechism, which he incorrectly dates in 1531 instead of 1529.<sup>98</sup> Here Luther prescribed that no one should be compelled to the sacrament, since faith cannot be forced, but how innocuous that formula had become appears from the requirement in this same preface that young people be compelled to learn the catechism, else their parents should refuse them food and drink

<sup>92</sup> W. A. 30, III, 551.20 f., 1532.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 552.32-33, cf. 562.6.

<sup>94</sup> W. A. 30, III, 561.11 f., 1533.

<sup>95</sup> E. A. 32, 403-404, 1544, condensed.

<sup>96</sup> End. 15, 219, August 31, 1543.

<sup>97</sup> E. A. 32, 99-274, 1542. These sentences are taken from different parts of the tract. For the heart of it see the summary beginning p. 252.

<sup>98</sup> Allen, 105.

and tell them that the magistrate would banish them from the land.<sup>99</sup> Wappler and Paulus have abundantly answered those writers who find a tacit protest in the postscripts which Luther appended to the memoranda of 1531 and 1536.<sup>100</sup>

More puzzling is the report of the Sermon on the Parable of the Tares in 1546.<sup>101</sup> Some find here a genuine plea for leaving the tares alone.<sup>102</sup> Others retort that this counsel is directed only to ministers, not to magistrates,<sup>103</sup> and, lest Luther be incorrectly reported, Paulus points out that he gave his approval to many commentaries of his friends in which the passage was so interpreted. As the sermon stands, it might readily be construed as restricting the magistrate, for Luther is reported as having said that the "tares are to be rooted out but not killed. Keep them from the altar and the pulpit. In no other way can they be prevented. . . . For with human power and force one cannot root them out or make them different."<sup>104</sup> That may mean nothing more than that the magistrate cannot hope to accomplish their conversion, but it may mean that he should not interfere at all. It is instructive here to note Luther's other comments on this passage. In the early years he used it wholly for tolerance.

We say that we should burn heretics, the tares with the wheat, . . . but what if Christ wished to make a saint of him who would have been saved?<sup>105</sup>

But in 1528, though the minister should use only the Word, the magistrate should permit but one preaching in the community. There should be no extermination (*ausrotten*), however.

Many have been put to death lately who might have been reclaimed. Wait until the harvest. Then they will be burned. Why attack a thief already condemned to the gallows?<sup>106</sup>

<sup>99</sup> W. A. 30, I, 349.

<sup>100</sup> Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens, Exkurs*, 123 f.; Paulus, 43.

<sup>101</sup> W. A. 51, 173-187.

<sup>102</sup> For a list of German authors, see Wappler, loc. cit. Boehmer does not appeal to this sermon in the 5th edition. Among English authors are J. W. Allen, 105, and R. H. Murray, 272.

<sup>103</sup> Paulus, 56-57; Faulkner, 153; Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, 125-126.

<sup>104</sup> W. A. 51, 184.4, 19, 37.

<sup>105</sup> W. A. 1, 625.5, 19 f., 1518; cf. End. 1, 77, 1516; 3, 176, 1521.

<sup>106</sup> E. A.<sup>2</sup> 4, 290-292.



In 1533 Luther declared unequivocally that the parable of the tares applied only to the kingdom of God and not to civil government.<sup>107</sup>

Some think that this parable means that the magistrate should not destroy heretics. Augustine thought so once, but he changed his mind. The minister uses the ban, the magistrate the sword; both work together.

But these two sermons also are both based on the reports of hearers, so that it is impossible to speak with certainty as to Luther's interpretation.

For his attitude to tolerance, however, there is an unquestioned passage from 1535 just after the fall of Münster. Luther was glad that God in his mercy had kept Germany from becoming a Turkey. Yet

the best protection is the sword of the Spirit, God's Word. But our bishops and *princes* won't hear that they should allow preaching and first win hearts from the devil with God's Word. They want to do everything with killing, take the body from the devil and leave him the hearts.<sup>108</sup>

The mercy of God to which Luther referred took the form of bloody repression. The repression Luther did not regret, but he was sorry that it had been so bloody. Princes must use the sword to suppress false teaching, but they must also remember that hearts are not won in that way. There must be something more than violence. That, I take it, is the gist of Luther's soberer thought in his later years.

This survey indicates a fairly uniform trend away from liberalism, but such a catalogue of Luther's utterances is not likely to satisfy those who consider his earlier tolerance merely a period of grace, or those who find implicit protests in the later period. The very word 'implicit' implies feelings which did not come to full expression. To meet such interpretations one must penetrate to the centre of Luther's religious life. Tolerance cannot be treated in isolation. It is the fruit of a successful adjustment to life, and of necessity involves the whole man.

The two great movements making for tolerance were mysticism and humanism. Luther's attitude toward them confirms the view of a fundamental, though not altogether constant,

<sup>107</sup> E. A.<sup>2</sup> 1, 189 and 196-197.

<sup>108</sup> W. A. 38, 348.30-349.6.

change. To both he was favorable in his earlier years, but he fully appropriated neither in the beginning and utterly repudiated neither at the end.

He was favorably disposed to tolerance by the mystic view of the way of salvation, of the nature of religious experience and authority, and of the character of the church and the ministry.<sup>108a</sup>

For the mystic the way of salvation is a way of suffering, bearing the cross, so that he who persecutes and crucifies another cannot be a Christian. So Luther could write:

Christ said that one should not resist evil and injustice, but always give way, suffer, and allow oneself to be despoiled. . . . We must pray for our

<sup>108a</sup> On Luther and mysticism see the following:

HERING, HERMANN, *Die Mystik Luthers*, 1879.

HUNZIGER, 'Luther und die deutsche Mystik,' *N. K. Z.*, 1908, pp. 972-988.

IHRINGER, BERNHARD, *Der Schuldbegriff bei den Mystikern der Reformationzeit*, 1912.

MÜLLER, A. V., *Luther und Tauler*, 1918.

SMITH, P., 'Luther's Doctrine of Justification by Faith,' *H. T. R.*, 1913, pp. 407-425.

SHEEL, OTTO, 'Taulers Mystik und Luthers reformatorische Entdeckung,' in *Festgabe für Kaftan*, 1920.

Ritschl (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 4th ed., 1903, 129, note 1) complained that Hering was not sufficiently acquainted with the history of mysticism to know what was specifically mystic. But that does not invalidate his judgment as to what was not mystic. For the contrast between Luther and the mystics he is still useful. He finds in Luther the influence of Latin mysticism from 1513 to 1515, and of German mysticism beginning in 1515, reaching the high-water mark from 1517 to 1519, and declining during 1521 and 1522 (p. 292).

A. V. Müller finds nearly all of Luther in Tauler, but admits that for Tauler the value of works depended on love, for Luther on faith (p. 70). Scheel goes to the other extreme and denies that Luther could have been led by Tauler to adopt the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, since Tauler did not go that way himself (p. 310). But Scheel has to admit that Luther learned from the mystics the need of direct contact with God (*Luthers Stellung zur heiligen Schrift*, p. 21). Hunziger (p. 980) and P. Smith (p. 419) contend that Tauler turned the tide by teaching Luther the need of passivity.

Very valuable are the works dealing with Luther's position as to the relation of the Word and the Spirit:

GRÜTZMACHER, RICHARD H., *Wort und Geist*, 1902.

LOCHER, J. C. S., *De Leer van Luther over Gods Woord*, 1903.

MARONIER, J. H., *Het Inwendig Woord*, 1890.

OTTO, RUDOLF, *Die Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther*, 1898.

Maronier makes the interesting suggestion that there is a connection between Luther's breach with mysticism, humanism, and tolerance in 1525. See pp. 19-20 and 128.

persecutors, love our enemies, and do good to those who spitefully use us. These are our Christian rights, dear friends. . . . Suffer, suffer, the cross, the cross, that is the Christian way, that and nothing else.<sup>109</sup>

If one judges the tree by its fruits, it is evident who are the true Christians. We do not kill, banish, and persecute any one who teaches other than we or starts a sect. . . . But the fruit of their [the papists'] faith is killing, burning, banishment, and persecution. . . . It is clear enough that they are the devil's Christians.<sup>110</sup>

We are persecuted in all places, slain, burned, and hanged for the sake of the Word. . . . We are as the early church, like Christ upon the cross. . . . No one can deny that we do not shed blood, kill, hang, and revenge ourselves.<sup>111</sup>

We must suffer, and leave vengeance to God. Otherwise we have an evil spirit in us.<sup>112</sup>

Some of these passages are from the later years, for Luther never forgot to talk in this fashion against the papists.

For the mystic this suffering is not merely a passive endurance, but must issue in forgiving love. So Luther could write:

We must have love and do to one another through love what God has done to us through faith, without which love, faith is nothing, as Paul says to the Corinthians. . . . There is need also of patience, for he who has faith and who trusts God and shows love to his neighbor in daily exercise cannot be without persecution. . . . But persecution brings patience, for if I were not tempted and persecuted I should know little of patience, and patience brings hope. . . . So through many temptations and persecutions faith increases more and more. Such a heart in which faith grows . . . cannot rest, nor content itself, but must pour itself out and do good to its neighbor.<sup>113</sup>

Unfortunately Luther, sometimes in the earlier, but more particularly in the later period, quite forgot what Paul had said to the Corinthians, and put faith above love.<sup>114</sup>

Religious experience for the mystic is inward and godgiven, hence not to be forced by outward weapons in human hands. No one said this better than Luther in his tract on Civil Government:

Faith is a free work to which no one can be forced. It is a divine work in the Spirit, let alone then that outward force should compel or create it. . . . These poor blind folk do not know what a vain and impossible thing they

<sup>109</sup> W. A. 18, 309-310, 1525.

<sup>111</sup> W. A. 51, 484-485, 1541.

<sup>113</sup> W. A. 10, III, 3-5, 1522.

<sup>110</sup> W. A. 19, 263, 1526.

<sup>112</sup> E. A. 18, 65, 1537.

<sup>114</sup> See notes 247-252.



undertake, for no matter how hard they command nor how strongly they rave, they cannot bring people any further than that they should follow with mouth and hand, but the heart they cannot compel.<sup>115</sup>

Luther never forgot that. He simply deprived it of all significance by saying that although faith cannot be forced, the public expression of error can be suppressed. Again, religious experience, being inward, is also too intangible to be the subject of a judicial examination. "How does the senseless government know how to judge and conquer such a secret, spiritual, and hidden thing as faith?"<sup>116</sup>

Likewise,

heresy is a spiritual thing, which cannot be cut with steel nor burned with fire nor drowned with water.<sup>117</sup>

To fight heresy is to fight the devil, as Paul says, "Our warfare is not with flesh and blood but with the spiritual wickedness, the principalities and powers, the world ruler of this darkness."<sup>118</sup>

And,

Satan is a spirit who has neither flesh nor bone, so that one cannot touch him with steel or fist. We must tear him from the hearts with the Word of truth. That is our sword and fist which no one can withstand.<sup>119</sup>

But Luther did not allegorize the devil, as did so many of the mystics, and that was why, when he called the sectaries devils incarnate, he could not but feel that something must be done about it.<sup>120</sup> Yet even after he became willing to destroy flesh and blood he did not forget that force alone will not overcome the devil.<sup>121</sup>

What makes the devil so formidable is that he attacks not our bodies but our faith.<sup>122</sup> Here is the question of religious authority. The mystic finds it in inward experience, not in a book or creed. So Luther sometimes talked as if God or the Spirit operated directly.<sup>123</sup> But more commonly, even in the beginning, he was unwilling to divorce the Spirit from the outward Word;<sup>124</sup> and so increasingly after the conflict with the radicals. Luther even went so far as to attribute to the Word

<sup>115</sup> W. A. 11, 264, 1523.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 268.27-28.

<sup>119</sup> E. A. 53, 143, July 10, 1522.

<sup>121</sup> W. A. 18, 359.26 f., 1525.

<sup>123</sup> Grützmacher, 12.

<sup>116</sup> W. A. 11, 264.7-9.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 269.21 f.

<sup>120</sup> Kühn, 85.

<sup>122</sup> E. A. 19, 268, 1532.

<sup>124</sup> Otto, 62-63.

an effectiveness practically *ex opere operato*, like that of baptism, when he wrote that

the holiness of the Word and the purity of the teaching is so mighty and sure that though Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, the pope, or the devil himself should preach or baptize correctly, without addition, pure and simple, then the true pure Word and the true pure baptism would be received.<sup>125</sup>

But the Word alone did not suffice, for the radicals appealed to it too; so Luther found himself driven to rely also upon creeds and tradition. By 1530 he was ready to define blasphemy as rejection of an article of faith clearly grounded in Scripture and universally accepted, like the Apostles' Creed.<sup>126</sup> In 1533 he shared in the preparation of a test for university professors at Wittenberg whereby they should subscribe to the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds and to the Augsburg Confession.<sup>127</sup> It is not so clear that the same test was applied to ministers,<sup>128</sup> but Luther would scarcely have objected. In 1534 he warned the authorities at Regensburg to beware of the sectaries. The Augsburg Confession should be the antidote.<sup>129</sup> In 1539 he was glad that Agricola had submitted to the Augsburg Confession and Apology. Should he teach otherwise it would be nothing and damned,<sup>130</sup> and the next year he joined the Wittenberg theologians in the statement:

Our opinion is set forth in the Augsburg Confession and Apology. From that we will not budge. If any one find it inadequate, ambiguous, or incorrect, let him ask us.<sup>131</sup>

From the conflict with the radicals came the appeal to tradi-

<sup>125</sup> W. A. 51, 521.19-23, 1541.

<sup>126</sup> W. A. 31, I, 208.11 f. Kühn (p. 107) contends that Luther was not concerned for the creed, but only for that in the creed which was to him religiously vital. But why did he mention it at all?

<sup>127</sup> C. R. 12, 7. Melancthon, writing in 1553, said "about" twenty years ago. The reliability of the passage has been impugned. For a vindication see Tschackert, *Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre*, § 90.

<sup>128</sup> G. Rietschel, *Luther und die Ordination*, 2nd ed., 1889, made the assertion on the basis of this passage, C. R. 12, 7. To be sure Melancthon referred to the example of the early church in applying a creedal test to ministers, but the contemporary situation had to do with the university. *Nolumus docentes a confessione nostra dissentire*, p. 6. In *hac Academia et coniunctis Ecclesiis*, p. 7.

<sup>129</sup> E. A. 55, 57-58, June 30, 1534.

<sup>130</sup> W. A. 50, 470.1-5, 1539.

<sup>131</sup> End. 12, 354, January 18, 1540.

tion. Thimme would put it earlier,<sup>132</sup> but, as it seems to me, without warrant. In 1520, before the final breach with Rome, Luther had been ready to accept that which was approved by the church universal,<sup>133</sup> but the next year he congratulated the Augustinians that they had gone contrary to the custom of so many centuries.

I have been disturbed myself [he added]. Are you alone right? Has everybody else been wrong? Have so many centuries not known? But Christ confirms me with his sure and certain words.<sup>134</sup>

And the next year Luther wrote:

Augustine must have been misunderstood, as if he would not have believed the gospel had he not been moved by universal Christianity. That would be false and unchristian. Everyone must believe solely because it is God's Word, and because he inwardly finds it to be the truth, even though an angel from heaven and the whole world should preach against it.<sup>135</sup>

When he said this, Luther must have forgotten that but a few months previous he had himself appealed to tradition against the radicals who rejected infant baptism. They could not be refuted out of Scripture; so Luther was compelled to discover a singular miracle of God in the fact that this article had never been questioned, not even by the heretics. To reject such testimony would be most impious.<sup>136</sup> Slippery ground this, when it came to antipapal polemic, but Luther wriggled out. After asserting that anything which had lasted so long had the stamp of God's approval, he thought to ask, "What about the papacy?" "That," he answered, "has survived as a work of God's wrath."<sup>137</sup> But the papists must have smiled to hear Luther say:

This testimony of the universal holy Christian church, *even if we had nothing else*, would be a sufficient warrant for holding this article [on the sacrament] and refusing to suffer or listen to a sectary, for it is dangerous and fearful to hear or believe anything against the unanimous testimony, belief, and teaching of the universal holy Christian churches, unanimously held in all the world from the beginning until now over fifteen hundred years.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift, 1903, p. 32.

<sup>133</sup> W. A. 6, 561.25.

<sup>134</sup> W. A. 8, 411, November 1, 1521.

<sup>135</sup> W. A. 10, II, 90.8 f., finished May 29, 1522.

<sup>136</sup> End. 3, 275.129-137, January 13, 1522.

<sup>137</sup> W. A. 26, 167-168, 1528.

<sup>138</sup> End. 9, 157 dates February or March 1532. Text in W.A. 30, III, 552.9-14, and E. A. 54, 288.



That is just what Charles V said against Luther at the Diet of Worms.

In his view of the church <sup>139</sup> Luther was influenced by three conceptions derived from corresponding religious types. To the mystic the church is a spiritual communion, indifferent to outward organization and alien to state control. The separatist, such as the Anabaptist, derives his view of the church from a type of religion centering about the Spirit, whose incoming is not a gradual process like the growth of the mystic, but a sudden conversion, symbolized by adult baptism and radically separating the once-born from the twice-born, who tend to form a close communion from which others are excluded by the ban. Here also interference by the magistrate is inadmissible; what has he to do with the new birth? The territorial church, consisting of all the baptized members of the community, rests on the assumption that baptism has a saving efficacy in and of itself. Any church which offers such self-operative means of grace may fittingly call on the magistrate to compel people to avail themselves of its benefits. All three of these views are found in Luther, in a general chronological order but not without overlapping and mutual modification.

<sup>139</sup> On this topic see the following:

- BRANDENBURG, ERICH, 'Martin Luthers Anschauung von Staat und Gesellschaft,' *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, Nr. 70, 1901, pp. 1-30.
- DREWS, PAUL, 'Entsprach das Staatskirchentum dem Ideale Luthers?' *Z. T. K.*, *Ergänzungsheft*, 1908.
- FOERSTER, ERICH, 'Fragen zur Luthers Kirchenbegriff aus der Gedankenwelt seines Alters,' in *Festgabe für Dr. Julius Kaftan*, 1920.
- HERMELINK, H., 'Zu Luthers Gedanken über Idealgemeinden und von weltlicher Obrigkeit,' *Z. K. G.*, 1908, 267 f.
- HOLL, KARL, *Luther Aufsätze: Luther und das landeskirchliche Kirchenregiment*, 1923, 326 f.
- KATTENBUSCH, F., 'Die Doppelschichtigkeit in Luther's Kirchenbegriff,' *T. S. K.*, vol. 100, *Lutherana V*, 1928, 197-347.
- KÖHLER, WALTHER, 'Entstehung der reformatio ecclesiarum Hassiae von 1526,' *D. Z. K. R.*, XVI, 1906.
- 'Zu Luthers Kirchenbegriff,' *C. W.*, 1907, 371-377.
- MEINECKE, FRIEDRICH, 'Luther über christliches Gemeinwesen und christlichen Staat,' *H. Z.*, 1920, 1-22.
- MÜLLER, KARL, *Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit*, 1910. The fullest and most satisfactory discussion. Summarized in *C. W.*, 1910, 510 f., and 525 f.
- RIEKER, KARL, *Die rechtliche Stellung der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands*, 1893.
- SOHM, RUDOLF, *Kirchenrecht*, Bd. I, 1892, 461 f.

The mystic strain appeared in 1520, when Christianity was defined as an "assembly of believers including all who have true faith, hope, and love. Though separated a thousand miles, they are one in the Spirit."<sup>140</sup> Again in 1523 Luther wrote that

the world and the mass of men are and remain unchristian, though they have all been baptized and are called Christians. But Christians live far from one another; so it is impossible that a Christian régime should extend over the world or even over a country or a large group.<sup>141</sup>

In 1526 again he said that his liturgical service was not intended for Christians, "who worship in the Spirit, but for non-Christians and those who need to be strengthened."<sup>142</sup> Yet this mystic inward church did not exclude the outward,<sup>143</sup> and in 1520 Luther could call on the German nobility to remove abuses.

The conception of the separatist church began in 1522, when Luther allowed those who wished communion in both kinds to receive it apart from the rest.<sup>144</sup> When the time came that all were required to communicate in both kinds, Luther desired to separate the true believers into a place apart.<sup>145</sup> In 1526 he went still further and recommended that earnest Christians meet alone in a house for prayer, reading, baptism, and the sacrament. Non-Christians should be excluded with the ban.<sup>146</sup> This was not precisely the Anabaptist separatist congregation, because Luther's group existed within the territorial church as leaven, a *collegium pietatis*, and did not exclude governmental interference with the larger group.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, where the magistrate was unfavorable, as in Bohemia, Luther recognized that such a congregation might become separatist.<sup>148</sup> This is

<sup>140</sup> W. A. 6, 292.36 f.

<sup>141</sup> W. A. 11, 251.35 f.

<sup>142</sup> W. A. 19, 73. Hermelink, Z. K. G., 1908, 292, finds a survival of such views until the year 1530.

<sup>143</sup> Stressed by Ernst Rietschel, 'Luthers Anschauung von der Unsichtbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit der Kirche,' T. S. K., No. 73, 1900, pp. 404-456.

<sup>144</sup> End. 3, 320-321, March 26, 1522.

<sup>145</sup> W. A. 12, 485.5, 1523.

<sup>146</sup> W. A. 19, 75.

<sup>147</sup> Stressed by Hermelink, Z. K. G., 1908, 311. He goes too far in that he deprives the congregational ideal of all significance for Luther, and contrasts merely the apocalyptic and neoplatonic conception of the church with the territorial. The apocalyptic probably had some effect, but it recurred in the later Luther without changing his view of the church, cf. pp. 291-292.

<sup>148</sup> W. A. 11, 411.13 f., 1523.

the justification for those who say that the Anabaptists took up an ideal which Luther had dropped,<sup>149</sup> for he did drop it. The last mention was in 1527, in a letter in which he expressed the hope that these devotional groups would be increased by the visitation,<sup>150</sup> as if the prince could create assemblies of sincere believers.

Nothing was now left but the territorial church, including all the baptized members of the community. An unqualified adherence to this conception was rendered easier by the fact that Luther had always accepted infant baptism on the specious ground that babies have faith, and further by the similar efficacy which he came to attribute to the Word. A semblance of the voluntary ideal was conserved only through the assumption that all residents freely adhered to the religion of the land. *Cuius regio eius religio*. If you don't like it, leave.

But some have contended that Luther was not suited with the trend of events<sup>151</sup> and protested against magisterial interference in the church. In 1527 the prince published an instruction to *his* visitors.<sup>152</sup> The next year Luther wrote a preface to a supplementary document, in which he remarked that the prince had been called on for this service "out of Christian love, for as civil magistrate he was under no obligation."<sup>153</sup> Is not that a rebuke to the prince for talking about *his* visitors?<sup>154</sup> It seems to me rather to be one of those perennial parentheses with which Luther laid the ghosts of a bygone liberalism, for in the conclusion of the preface he went on: "Although the prince is not commanded to rule in spiritual matters" — another of those parentheses — "nevertheless as civil magistrate he must not suffer division, sectarianism, and sedition," and should accord to the recalcitrant the treatment which Constantine meted out to Arius. These remarks are significant also for the controversy as to whether Luther allowed the magistrate to regulate the church in his capacity as magistrate or only as an influential church member. If the words are taken

<sup>149</sup> W. Köhler, D. Z. K. R., 1906, 217-218, and C. W. 1907, 376.

<sup>150</sup> E. A. 53, 399, March 29, 1527.

<sup>151</sup> So Brandenburg, Drews, and Holl.

<sup>152</sup> *Unsere verordneten visitatores*, Sehling, E. K. O., I, 142.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* 150.

<sup>154</sup> Holl, p. 375.



at their face value, they mean no more than that the magistrate should act as an influential member of the church so long as he met with no opposition, but if any one resisted, should change his capacity and draw the sword as magistrate. There is not much room here for tears over the failure of the congregational ideal.<sup>155</sup>

With the change of view as to the efficacy of the Word and the nature of the church came inevitably a different conception of the call and place of the minister. Rietschel is correct in saying that Luther believed in the priesthood of all believers to the end and desired a regular ministry in the beginning,<sup>156</sup> but no one excelled Luther in the ingenuity with which he could forsake his principles without abandoning his premises. As for the call of the minister he declared in 1523:

Among non-Christians a Christian needs no other call than that he is a Christian, inwardly called and anointed by God. . . . In such a case a Christian in brotherly love looks upon the need of the poor perverted souls and does not wait for authorization from the prince or bishop. . . . A Christian has such authority that *even among Christians* he should step forth and teach when he sees that there is no teacher.<sup>157</sup>

But in 1524 and 1525 Münzer<sup>158</sup> and Carlstadt<sup>159</sup> were called upon to prove their inner call with a miracle. It was not enough to have swallowed the Holy Ghost, feathers and all.<sup>160</sup> By 1528 the magistrate had superseded the Holy Ghost.<sup>161</sup> And in 1530 unauthorized preachers were to be turned over to the executioner.<sup>162</sup>

All are priests, but not all are ministers.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Rieker, Sohm, and Foerster contended that for Luther the magistrate was bound to serve the church because of his baptism into the corpus christianum. This view was opposed by Brandenburg, Drews, and Holl, who would have the magistrate act only as a Christian believer. Meinecke said that for Luther the corpus christianum survived in the territorial church, but it is not easy to decide in what capacity the magistrate acts.

<sup>156</sup> Georg Rietschel, *Luther und die Ordination*, 2nd ed., 1889, chap. 1.

<sup>157</sup> W. A. 11, 412-413, cf. W. A. 12, 171-189, 1523.

<sup>158</sup> E. A. 53, 255, August 14, 1524.

<sup>159</sup> W. A. 18, 96.27 f., 1525.

<sup>160</sup> W. A. 17, I, 361-362, 1525.

<sup>162</sup> W. A. 31, I, 224, cf. 32, 386 f.

<sup>161</sup> W. A. 27, 285.25 f.

<sup>163</sup> W. A. 31, I, 211.7, 1530.

I won't suffer a preacher in office, even though he works miracles, unless he is sure that he has the right teaching and Word, and a certain office.<sup>164</sup>

And in 1531 Luther would not listen to an unauthorized angel.<sup>165</sup>

Since the Word, as we have seen, could be effective even in the mouth of a bad man, the office of the preacher naturally became more important than his character.

Not all Christians in the preaching office are devout, but God does n't care about that. The people can be what they like. The office is nevertheless right and good, and not of men but of God.<sup>166</sup>

Through his office, the Word, and the sacrament which he administers to you, [the preacher] brings you to faith, saves you from the power of the devil and eternal death, and conducts you to heaven and eternal life . . . and this he can do although he is himself a bad and unbelieving man.<sup>167</sup>

Even among the Roman Catholics the office is valid,<sup>168</sup> though it is not to be assumed that the character is good. The point is precisely that it does not need to be.<sup>169</sup>

Such an office inevitably took precedence over all others. In 1520 Luther has been at pains to tear down the wall which the papists had erected in putting the sacerdotal above the civil,<sup>170</sup> but ten years later he built it up again with the assertion that the magistracy is in no way to be compared with the preaching-office,<sup>171</sup> and in 1543 he could write that

to despise the minister is to despise Christ. He cares more about the true minister than for all the unchristian officers, burgomasters, judges, and the whole world with all its magistracy, force, and honor, for this office, when it is not Christian, does not help one to heaven as does the ministerial, nor has Christ bought it so dearly with his blood.<sup>172</sup>

Finally, among the changes which issued from an abandonment of the mystic position may be noted Luther's retraction in 1530 of his objection to armed resistance against the emperor on the part of the German princes. This change, however,

<sup>164</sup> E. A. 48, 139-140.

<sup>165</sup> End. 9, 129, November 27.

<sup>166</sup> W. A. 32, 529.17 f., 1530-32.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 528.35 f.

<sup>168</sup> W. A. 52, 310.28 f., 1544.

<sup>169</sup> W. A. 52, 759.21 f., 1541. G. Wünsch, *Die Bergpredigt bei Luther*, p. 102\*, who collects these passages, misinterprets the last as if it meant "dass Amt allein noch nicht die rechte Autorität mache, wenn die Person schlecht sei."

<sup>170</sup> W. A. 6, 407.10 f.

<sup>171</sup> W. A. 30, II, 554.20 f., 1530.

<sup>172</sup> End. 15, 100, January 27, 1543, condensed.

should not be stressed, for the situation had altered. In the early period the question was whether the prince should resist Luther's extradition. The answer was no. But after 1530 the point was whether the prince might oppose the forcible re-institution of Catholicism. The answer was yes.<sup>173</sup>

Neither is the whole drift away from mysticism in Luther to be unduly emphasized, for he was never fully a mystic even in the beginning. Paul and Augustine influenced him more than Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica*. The difference is partly in the conception of man, for Luther believed more thoroughly in the total depravity of the once-born.<sup>174</sup> But deeper is the difference in the view of God. For the mystic God is wholly love, and the only obstacle to union with him is human self-assertion, which must be cowed and the old Adam crucified, that the human may become divine. Hence the religious life is a repetition of the incarnation. But for Luther God was not only love but also anger, to be placated by the sacrificial death of Christ. Hence the atonement was more important than the incarnation.<sup>175</sup> As a consequence love gave way to faith. The incarnation for the mystic was a daily experience calling for a constant exercise of love, but the atonement, even when repeated in the mass, was largely an object of faith, and still more so when performed once and for all by Christ. Here was an historic fact, to be inwardly appropriated, certainly, but first of all to be believed. That is one reason why Luther from the outset could insist that right teaching is a thousand times more important than right life.<sup>176</sup> Further, there is more of commercialism, work-righteousness, and merit in Luther's view than in that of the mystics, not our merit of course, but Christ's.<sup>177</sup>

<sup>173</sup> Karl Müller, 'Luthers Äusserungen über das Recht des bewaffneten Widerstands gegen den Kaiser,' in *Sitzungsberichte*, Munich Academy, philos.-philol. und hist. Kl., 8. Abh., 1915, p. 28.

<sup>174</sup> This is the justification for Holl's statement that what distinguished Luther from the 'Schwärmer' was his 'Schuldgefühl' (p. 447). Too much should not be made of this, for the mystics had a decided 'Schuldbegriff.' See Ihringer.

<sup>175</sup> Dilthey emphasized the 'Opfertod Christi' as the distinguishing difference. 'Auffassung und Analyse der Menschen im 15. und 16. Jahrh.,' *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1892, 360.

<sup>176</sup> W. A. 1, 12.29 f., 1512; W. A. 6, 581.11 f., 1520; E. A. 53, 265, 1524.

<sup>177</sup> The teaching of the 'Verdienst Christi' may not be a very prominent element in Luther's theology, but it is there. J. Köstlin, *Luthers Theologie*, 2nd ed., II, 160; Ritschl,



Tauler, instead of annihilating our purchasing power in order to exalt that of Christ, lifted the religious life into a different atmosphere.

Dear children [he wrote], thou shouldst so lose thyself in the love of thy God that thou lovest him wholly and alone and carest neither for desire, utility, nor reward, but only for his worth and honor, though he should never thank thee. . . . My child, love him and leave it to him whether he rewards thee or not. Never think of it.<sup>178</sup>

All of this is significant for tolerance, which is not exercised by an angry God toward a depraved man. Nor do faith and merit provide as favorable an atmosphere as a purely disinterested love.

The second great movement making for religious tolerance was humanism, for humanism claimed freedom for untrammelled investigation on the part of the scholar. Luther's humanism manifested itself in his criticisms of the Bible.<sup>179</sup> It

Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung, 4th ed., 155 and 230 ff.; R. Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 1905, § 67, 9. <sup>178</sup> Cited by A. V. Müller, 82-83.

<sup>179</sup> See the following:

FULLERTON, KEMPER, 'Luther's Doctrine and Criticism of Scripture,' *Bibliotheca Sacra*, LXIII, 1906, 1-34 and 284-299.

HARNACK, ADOLF VON, *Dogmengeschichte*, 2nd ed., III, 724 and 728.

HOLL, KARL, 'Luther's Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst,' in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, Luther, 1923, 544-582.

HOWORTH, HENRY H., 'The Origin and Authority of the Biblical Canon according to the Continental Reformers. I. Luther and Karlstadt,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1907, 321-365; 'II. Luther, Zwingli, Lefèvre, and Calvin,' January 1908, 188-230.

KÖSTLIN, JULIUS, *Luthers Theologie*, 2nd ed., II, 31 f.

KOLMODIN, A., *Skriptens Auktoritet Enligt Luther*, Stockholm, 1919.

KUNZE, JOHANNES, *Glaubensregel, Heilige Schrift und Taufbekenntnis*, 1899, 479-525.

LOCHER, J. C. S., *De Leer van Luther over Gods Woord*, Amsterdam, 1903.

MEISSINGER, K. A., *Luthers Exegese in der Frühzeit*, 1911.

PREUSS, HANS, *Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther bis zur Leipziger Disputation*, 1901.

SCHEEL, OTTO, *Luthers Stellung zur heiligen Schrift (Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge, 29)*, 1902.

SMITH, PRESERVED, 'The Methods of Reformation Interpreters of the Bible,' *Biblical World*, October 1911, 235-245.

'The German Bible,' in *Martin Luther*, 1911.

THIMME, KARL, *Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift*, 1903.

TSCHACKERT, PAUL, *Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre*, 1910, 56-71.

UNDRITZ, OSKAR, 'Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther in den Anfangsjahren der Reformation,' *N. K. Z.*, 1897, 568-620.

must of course be admitted that his primary interest was not humanistic but religious. He had arrived at his doctrine of justification by faith before he came to regard the Bible as the sole authority, and having done so, he was interested in that alone in the Bible which supported his doctrine. That was why Paul was a better gospel than the gospels and John to be preferred to the Synoptics. That was why James was an epistle of straw. On historical grounds he might just as well have complained of 2 Peter or 2 and 3 John, but he left them alone.<sup>180</sup> The same christological interest was the motive for his estimate of the Old Testament. Genesis he liked because Abraham was justified by faith, and the Psalms because there is so much about human worthlessness.<sup>181</sup> It is no humanist who could search through translations and pick out the most edifying,<sup>182</sup> or stick to the plain words as long as he could and diverge only when forced to do so by an article of faith;<sup>183</sup> no humanist who could tell the radicals that only *idolatrous* images are condemned in Scripture, whereas Scripture makes no such distinction,<sup>184</sup> or who could translate, "The just shall live by faith *alone*," and

Opinion on Luther's attitude toward the Bible differs as to his primary interest, whether humanistic or religious, and as to his consistency and development. The development is fully recorded by Köstlin. Fullerton (295-297) recognizes a conflict between a free handling and a stress on formal authority, with increasing emphasis on the latter. Locher (47) similarly finds unresolved inconsistencies, with a greater stress in the later Luther on the unity of the Bible (174). Kolmodin and Holl make the predominant interest religious, with but slight change. Kolmodin (59-60) minimizes the changes on Revelation and James. So, too, Tschackert, who records the changes in a footnote without comment (62 note 1). Howorth, too, makes little of them (1907, 355, note 1). Kunze sees in Luther a humanist from the beginning to the end. Preuss and Thimme find a combination of the religious and humanistic approach. Preuss traces the progress only to 1519, but he remarks that Harnack makes the early Luther too liberal (99 notes 5 and 6). Thimme admits Luther's changes, but does not consider them particularly significant (66 and 87); Harnack and Smith (Martin Luther, 267) stress Luther's inconsistency, and Scheel, too, though he so emphasizes verbal inspiration that one feels the balance tipping in that direction. He cannot, of course, admit the humanist in Luther. Undritz goes only through 1521, and does not discuss the questions which are of interest here. Meissinger is concerned with Luther's scholarship.

I have not given references for the statements in the text, unless they are not in Fullerton, or are particularly important for the argument.

<sup>180</sup> Kolmodin, 59; Scheel, 48, who notes a slight criticism of 2 Peter.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Thimme, 53.

<sup>182</sup> Meissinger, 42.

<sup>183</sup> E. A. 33, 24.

<sup>184</sup> Holl, 564, cites W. A. 15, 345.22 f.

who, when reminded that the original does not read 'alone' could justify himself on the ground that this is what it meant in any case.<sup>185</sup> A thorough-going humanist would scarcely be prepared to believe that two and five make eight if Scripture says so, or to reject the Copernican system on biblical grounds. Such freedom as Luther allowed was on points about which he did not greatly care. When it came to something which he considered religiously vital, he could be stubborn for the letter. The classic example is the Marburg debate, when he drew a circle in chalk about the words which he had written on the table, *Hoc est corpus meum*. "The devil can't get away from that."<sup>186</sup> Zwingli and Oecolampadius got away from it very nicely, and the devil might have escaped too had he not been well aware that were he to break through the scriptural circle, Luther would circumscribe him with another, for Luther declared that if there were six hundred passages in Scripture against justification by faith, he would appeal to the Lord of Scripture against Scripture.<sup>187</sup> Whether free or bound his interest was always religious.

At the same time, if Luther was not a humanist, he was at least tolerant of humanism within a limited sphere. To feel the difference one need only compare Osiander's treatment of Peter's denial. Since the four gospels have accounts of the denial and of its prediction, and since there are verbal differences in all, and since the Holy Spirit could not make the slightest mistake, therefore, inferred Osiander, Peter must have denied Christ eight times.<sup>188</sup> How Luther would have scoffed at that! The discrepancies in the accounts of the denial were to him trivial. He did not care whether Christ cleansed the temple once or twice, nor was he disturbed by the chronological differences in the account of Jesus' death.<sup>189</sup> Matthew 27, 9 makes the mistake of Jeremiah for Zechariah. Stephen's speech does not correctly cite the Old Testament. The prophets made mis-

<sup>185</sup> W. A. 30, II, 632 f. and especially 637.1 f.

<sup>186</sup> W. A. 30, III, 110.15 f. and 122.25, 1529.

<sup>187</sup> Kolmodin, note 124.

<sup>188</sup> J. J. Wettstein, *Prolegomena in Novum Testamentum*, p. 888. The statement is made by Castellio. I have not seen Osiander.

<sup>189</sup> W. A. 46, 726.11; Kolmodin, note 130.



takes in their predictions. Chronicles is inferior to Kings. On James and Revelation Luther brought to bear various historical considerations as to authorship and style. This humanistic interest appears in the later as well as in the earlier Luther. There is no development here.

Nevertheless there is a development in Luther's attitude to the Bible, which made against freedom whether religious or humanistic. He became in time more interested in the maintenance of the canon. In the general preface of 1522 he had differentiated the books of the New Testament as to their value, giving first place to Paul, 1 Peter, the Gospel of John, and other books, and describing James as an epistle of straw.<sup>190</sup> In all the later editions this was dropped. Again in the same year, in the preface to the sermon on 1 Peter, Luther discriminated in the same fashion between the New Testament books,<sup>191</sup> but in the preface to the edition of 1539 this again disappeared.<sup>192</sup> In 1522 Luther spoke slightly of the prophecies of Lichtenberger, Joachim, and most of Revelation. In the editions after 1532 "most of Revelation" became "and the like."<sup>193</sup> The preface to Revelation of 1522 brought both religious and historical criticisms against the book.<sup>194</sup> In 1545 Luther still had his doubts about the authorship, but the other strictures disappeared.<sup>195</sup> Thimme finds such changes of slight significance, because Luther had not altered his opinion on the books in question,<sup>196</sup> but that is precisely what makes them significant. If he retained his strictures for himself, but modified his official condemnations, he can have done so only out of regard for a fixed and formal canon, and obviously the sort of interest which suppresses private judgments in compliance with external authority is not conducive to humanistic scholarship.

In more direct fashion the trend toward a unified Bible made for intolerance, in that it gave Luther an opportunity to appeal to the example of the Old Testament for the suppression of false teaching. The New Testament offered but little in this

<sup>190</sup> E. A. 63, 114.

<sup>191</sup> E. A. 51, 324 f.

<sup>192</sup> E. A. 52, 1 f.

<sup>193</sup> E. A. 8<sup>2</sup>, 23; for notation see E. A. 7, XL.

<sup>194</sup> E. A. 63, 169-170.

<sup>195</sup> E. A. 63, 168-169.

<sup>196</sup> Thimme, 66 and 87.

direction;<sup>197</sup> hence Luther found it convenient to forget his assertions that Moses is no longer binding.<sup>198</sup> After 1530 he was ready to justify himself by the example of that very same Moses, who commanded blasphemers and false teachers to be stoned,<sup>199</sup> as well as of Hezekiah, who destroyed the brazen serpent,<sup>200</sup> and of David, the hunter of heresy,<sup>201</sup> though in 1523 he had already cited Josiah's treatment of the prophets of Baal.<sup>202</sup>

It may not be amiss at this point to note the bearing of Luther's changed attitude to the Roman law.<sup>203</sup> The Germanic law prescribed or assumed the death-penalty for heresy, but was not specific as to what constituted heresy.<sup>204</sup> The Roman law expressly covered Donatism, Arianism, and Manicheism.<sup>205</sup> In the period of the Reformation the antitrinitarians were treated as Arians, the Anabaptists as Donatists and Manichees.<sup>206</sup> The Roman law played a prominent part in Protestant heresy trials, for example, in those of Servetus,<sup>207</sup> Gentile,<sup>208</sup> and Joris.<sup>209</sup> Melancthon frequently appealed to it.<sup>210</sup> Luther

<sup>197</sup> Luther appealed to Tit. 3, 10 and 1 Tim. 6, 20; W. A. 30, I, 209.7 f., 1530. Cf. W. A. 30, III, 549.30, 1532.

<sup>198</sup> W. A. 18, 75.11 f. and 358.33 f., 1525.

<sup>199</sup> W. A. 30, I, 209.4 f., 1530.

<sup>200</sup> E. A. 54, 254, September 14, 1531.

<sup>201</sup> W. A. 51, 234.12 f., 1534-35.

<sup>202</sup> End. 4, 211.

<sup>203</sup> Eugène Ehrhardt, *La notion du droit naturel chez Luther*, 297-298.

<sup>204</sup> F. Kattenbusch, *Luthers Stellung zu den oecumenischen Symbolen*, 1883, 2.

<sup>205</sup> References in H. C. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, I, 1922, 212-215, criticized by Vacandard, *The Inquisition*, 9th impression, 1926, 23; F. Ruffini, *La Libertà Religiosa*, 1901, 36-38, English translation, 1912, 33-36. For a detailed study see W. K. Boyd, *The Ecclesiastical Edicts of the Theodosian Code* (Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Columbia University, vol. XXIV, No. 2), 1905.

<sup>206</sup> For Donatism see the references given in notes 210 and 211. For Manicheism, C. R., III, 201. Servetus was accused of Manicheism, *Calvini opera*, VIII, 463 and 773, C. R., VIII, 520.

<sup>207</sup> W. Köhler, *Reformation und Ketzerprozess*, 40, makes the statement that it was not Calvin but Servetus who appealed to the Roman law, and that the plea was promptly rejected because Geneva recognized only the Old Testament. On the contrary it was merely Servetus' interpretation of the law which was rejected, in that he claimed that under Constantine banishment was the maximum penalty (C. R., VIII, 762). The procurator told him that the death-penalty had been exacted from Constantine to Justinian, and that he was guilty of various offenses enumerated in the imperial codes (771 f.). Servetus upbraided Calvin for relying on Justinian (797 f.).

<sup>208</sup> Trechsel, *Die Protestantischen Antitrinitarier*, 1844, II, 328.

<sup>209</sup> Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, *Anderweitiger Versuch einer vollständigen und unpartheyischen Ketzergeschichte*, 1748, 435-440.

<sup>210</sup> That is, the Theodosian code, C. R., II, 18, 712. He considered the penalties too severe, III, 242; IX, 1004; XII, 143.

gave his approval to the memoranda of 1531 and 1536, which relied on the Theodosian code.<sup>211</sup> In his own writings he appealed to the example of Constantine.<sup>212</sup>

Thus far we have been considering tendencies consonant with a fundamental change in Luther's point of view. At the same time he was more or less inconsistent all along the line. His contemporaries were not slow to point this out. Faber drew up a book of his contradictions,<sup>213</sup> on which Luther commented to Melanchthon:

Our opponents, to show off their erudition, collect contradictions from my books. How can these asses judge the contradictions of our writings, when they understand neither part of the contradictories? How can our doctrine seem anything else than mere contradiction in the eyes of the impious, when at the same time it demands and condemns works, at the same time removes and restores ceremonies, at the same time honors and chides the magistrate, at the same time asserts and denies sin?<sup>214</sup>

During the Peasants' War Luther had already been called upon to meet the charge because of his assertion that one might now merit heaven by killing and shedding blood. "My stars!" exclaimed his opponents, "How has Luther forgotten himself, who until now has said that one must be saved without works by faith alone. But here he not only attributes blessedness to works, but to the cruel work of bloodshed."

"Lieber Gott!" retorted Luther, "how narrowly I am pressed. Why can't I talk like the common man and Scripture. Doesn't Christ say, 'Great is their reward in heaven'? Yet works avail nothing with God."<sup>215</sup>

Luther was too voluble and too prominent to escape inconsistency or to be left unaware of it.

Nevertheless some of his contradictions are only apparent. For example, in 1529 he recommended the suppression of Emser's New Testament because the poisonous glosses might do a great deal of damage,<sup>216</sup> but in 1542 he encouraged the publication of the Koran.

<sup>211</sup> C. R., IV, 739; III, 199.

<sup>212</sup> W. A. 26, 200.31, 1528; W. A. 31, 1, 209.27, 1530.

<sup>213</sup> End. 8, 118, Brief 1718, note 3.

<sup>214</sup> End. 8, 137, July 27, 1530.

<sup>215</sup> W. A. 18, 399.26 f., condensed.

<sup>216</sup> E. A. 54, 113, November 23, 1529.



How could the fathers have met the secret poison of the heretics had they not been able to read their books?

Nothing could do the Turk more harm than to bring the Koran to light, and let Christians see what a cursed and confused book it is.<sup>217</sup>

The reasons which Luther alleged are inconsistent enough, but his conduct was not. He would constrain only those who were likely to do some damage.

Other apparent discrepancies are due to the fact that Luther was concerned to use force only for matters which were to him religiously vital. "It is one thing to tolerate the weak in non-essentials, but to tolerate in matters clearly impious is itself impious."<sup>218</sup> This distinction between the fundamentals and the adiaphora was common to all the reformers. Even the most stringent, like Calvin, would admit that "a slight superstition may be corrected with patience,"<sup>219</sup> and the most tolerant, like Castellio, drew the line somewhere. "Had Servetus declared that God was a devil that would be real blasphemy and I should have rejoiced in his death."<sup>220</sup> It was all a question of the size of the circle.

But most of Luther's inconsistencies are not so readily disposed of. He did his best to wriggle out by ingenuity, bluster, or disingenuousness. Take, for example, the conflict which Allen finds in Luther's wavering between the view that the magistrate is under positive obligation to maintain the true religion by force and the view that the sovereign is bound to allow his subjects to believe what they can. "Yes," Luther would have answered, "to *believe* what they can, but not to *say* what they believe." No one can be forced to faith, but public false teaching can be prohibited. The same conflict was involved when the magistrate was called on to suppress false teaching and yet to respect conscience. Here, too, Luther would admit no inconsistency, for false teaching involves blasphemy and blasphemy and conscience are mutually exclusive categories. As the one grew the other contracted, so that there was no overlapping. With time the blasphemy-circle was increasingly well

<sup>217</sup> End. 14, 350-352, October 27, 1542.

<sup>218</sup> End. 4, 211.31, August 19, 1523.

<sup>219</sup> Calvini opera, VIII, 477.

<sup>220</sup> Contra libellum Calvini, 181-182, cf. 130.

populated at the expense of the conscience-group. The papists were blasphemers from the outset.<sup>221</sup> They were soon joined by the sectaries,<sup>222</sup> the peasants,<sup>223</sup> the sacramentarians,<sup>224</sup> the Anabaptists,<sup>225</sup> and the Jews.<sup>226</sup> And of each, as he was transferred, it was said that his conscience witnessed against him, he had a fictitious conscience, *erdichtetes Gewissen*.<sup>226a</sup>

The Jews plead that they do not go according to the New Testament and the faith of Christians. . . . No, old chap, it is not a question of what you know or want to know, but of what you ought to know and are bound to know. . . . It doesn't help, but rather hinders, to say that they don't know or care anything about the book. One ought to know about God's book.<sup>227</sup>

But Luther could not always sail off with such gusto. To protest against papist persecution while suppressing one's own dissenters, to ask for quarter but to give none, is a variety of inconsequence from which only a very signal ingenuity can find an escape. The best way out is to say frankly, "We are right and they are wrong. Therefore they have no right to wrong us, but we have the right to wrong them." Luther came very close to that when he wrote:

It may be said that the Emperor Charles is also certain that the papist teaching is true, and that he is consequently justified according to God's command in using all his might to wipe out our teaching as heretical from his kingdom. Answer: . . . we know that he is not certain, and cannot be certain, because we know that he is wrong and opposes the gospel.<sup>228</sup>

This is safe ground, as far as consistency goes, but Luther seldom stuck to it. More commonly, even in the days of his greatest severity, he used arguments against Roman Catholic persecution which would have cut the ground equally from under his own.

<sup>221</sup> 1518, W. A. 1, 392.2, 'Schriftlesteren'; 1519, End. 2, 113.378; 1520, End. 2, 510.45; W. A. 6, 348.8-10, 431.27.

<sup>222</sup> 'Rottengeister,' W. A. 16, 470.5, 1525.

<sup>223</sup> W. A. 18, 319.22, 359.23, 1525.

<sup>224</sup> End. 5, 385, 1526, cf. E. A. 32, 404, 1544.

<sup>225</sup> End. 6, 263.14, May 12, 1528.

<sup>226</sup> E. A. 32, 253, 1543.

<sup>226a</sup> Papists, End. 4, 330.10, April 26, 1524; E. A. 53, 368, February 9, 1526; 'Rot-ten,' W. A. 17, I, 146.16, 1525; Carlstadt, W. A. 18, 207.21, 1525; Peasants, W. A. 18, 360.14, 1525; Sacramentarians, E. A. 32, 410-411. Luther had no doubt that Zwingli died in blasphemy. His followers are to be avoided as 'autokatakritos,' 1544.

<sup>227</sup> E. A. 32, 246-247, 1543.

<sup>228</sup> E. A. 54, 180, July 30, 1530.

If we are heretics, the papists should resist us with Scripture and not appeal to the executioner, who doesn't belong here.<sup>229</sup>

Who told you to introduce such innovations that you rule and make war with the civil sword . . . and shed innocent blood? Haven't you seen, you sharp-eyed moles, that the apostles and the ancient church did not compel the world with the sword or increase the church with war?<sup>230</sup>

In 1533 Luther appealed to Duke George on behalf of the Protestants of Leipzig. Let the prince permit them to receive the sacrament in both kinds. A father would not cast off a son who had lost an eye or broken a leg without fault of his own, nor should a prince reject his loyal subjects because of this one point to which they were forced by conscience.<sup>231</sup> But both before and after this Luther rejected the plea of the Swiss for peace on the ground that they differed from him on but one point. They were represented as saying to him:

"Ah, dear Luther, it is to be hoped that God won't be so fearfully harsh as to damn men on account of one article when they faithfully adhere to the rest." To this it must be said [retorted Luther] that God cannot permit his poor miserable blind creatures to be so proud against their Lord and Creator. . . . It is to be hoped that his humble obedient creatures will not deny or blaspheme a single word.<sup>232</sup>

Another great inconsistency is inherent in any form of Christianity which makes its peace with a non-christian society. The Sermon on the Mount has always been a stranger in the world, and any one who tries to take out citizenship papers for it is faced with severe difficulties. No one stated the antithesis more strongly than Luther, when he wrote:

The sayings on mercy belong in God's kingdom and among Christians, not in the kingdom of the world, for the Christian should not only be merciful, but should suffer all things, robbery, burning, murder, death, and hell, let alone that he should not smite, kill, or retaliate, but the kingdom of the world, which is nothing other than a servant of God's wrath on the wicked and a proper foretaste of hell and of eternal death, should not be merciful, but hard, severe, and wrathful in its office and work, for its weapon is no rosary, nor a flower of love, but a plain sword.<sup>233</sup>

Luther apparently kept this dualism thoroughly intact when he assigned the Old Testament to the magistrate and to the

<sup>229</sup> E. A.<sup>2</sup> 2, 54, 1534.

<sup>230</sup> W. A. 51, 497.25-29, 1541.

<sup>231</sup> End. 9, 285-287, April 5, 1533.

<sup>232</sup> E. A. 32, 419, condensed, 1545; cf. E. A. 19, 269, 1532.

<sup>233</sup> W. A. 18, 389.27-35, 1525.



kingdom of the world, the New Testament to the minister and to the kingdom of God. The magistrate rules over wolves, lions, and eagles, and must have a sword. The minister uses only the Word.<sup>234</sup> The sayings on mercy in the Sermon on the Mount<sup>235</sup> do not apply to the civil sphere.<sup>236</sup> According to Moses the magistrate must take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus rebuked merely the private citizen who claimed for himself this right.<sup>237</sup> Moses permitted the destruction of the Canaanites by Joshua because the latter was a properly constituted magistrate.<sup>238</sup>

All of this would be simple enough if Luther, like some of the Anabaptists, had kept the two kingdoms completely apart; but he did not. The magistrate, he said, belongs not wholly in the kingdom of the world, for he may be a Christian.<sup>239</sup> Nor is the minister subject wholly to the Sermon on the Mount. He will suffer himself to be despised as to his person, but not as to his office.<sup>240</sup> As a minister he may revile and curse, though as a private individual he would say never a word.<sup>241</sup> Again, the father of a family, as a father, must protect his dependents. This he does, not as a Christian, but as a member of Caesar's kingdom.<sup>242</sup> And even the individual Christian, if there is no magistrate about, may defend himself as a representative of the magistrate, and the minister himself, if he is assaulted in a lonely place by robbers who take him for an ordinary individual, may then defend himself in the name of the government, but if he is attacked as a minister he must resign himself. The dualism is not, as in the Roman Church, between two

<sup>234</sup> W. A. 11, 252.5, 1523; cf. W. A. 6, 267.35, 1520.

<sup>235</sup> W. A. 18, 387.9, citation of Luke 6, 36.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. 390.6.

<sup>237</sup> W. A. 32, 389. Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Luther, 248-249, note 4, contends that in spite of Luther's preface this sermon cannot be relied on for his opinions, because the reporter is unknown, and some sayings sound more like Melancthon. I have used it only in conjunction with similar utterances from unimpeachable sources.

<sup>238</sup> W. A. 18, 87.13 f., 1525.

<sup>239</sup> W. A. 11, 254.27 f.

<sup>240</sup> W. A. 36, 552.15.

<sup>241</sup> W. A. 32, 399.11 f., cf. W. A. 19, 595-596, 1526. Cf. also G. Wünsch, *Die Bergpredigt bei Luther*, 103.

<sup>242</sup> W. A. 32, 390.19-31. This is paralleled by the passages cited by Holl himself, 286-287, on which the rest of my paragraph is based.

classes, the lay and the cleric, but rather within each individual, between his person and his office.<sup>243</sup>

Troeltsch so exaggerates the cleavage as to represent the Christian, in his magisterial capacity, as released from the Christian ethic, subject only to the natural law and hence free to use force for its own sake, like Machiavelli's prince.<sup>244</sup> Holl takes vigorous exception to that unfortunate comparison, contending that Luther never abandoned the magistrate to the devil. The Sermon on the Mount was not abrogated. The magistrate, even in the exercise of force, was employing the Christian law of love.<sup>245</sup> H. M. Müller contends that Luther's view lay between these extremes. The magistrate is subject to the natural law, which is not, however, a Machiavellian law of self-interest, but rather one of charity and philanthropy. The individual Christian obeys the Christian law of love, which calls for self-sacrifice and non-resistance.<sup>246</sup>

Competent scholars are able to offer such divergent interpretations of Luther because he was himself so many-sided. There are passages which look in all directions. For Troeltsch it may be said that no matter what harmonistic devices are employed the fact remains that according to Luther the Christian magistrate may kill the Turk, slaughter the peasant, and behead the religious dissenter. The minister may curse and revile. The father may protect his family, and the individual, in an emergency, may exercise self-defense, all of which is not precisely turning the other cheek. And often enough Luther bluntly admitted it.

Love beareth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things, but faith indeed or the Word bears nothing at all, but denounces, devours, or, as Jerome says, roots out, destroys, and dissipates.<sup>247</sup>

When some wish to

suppress the Gospel I am bound to obey faith more than love, for faith is above love. . . . Faith I must defend with head, neck, and belly. . . . When we have that we can come back to love.<sup>248</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Cf. E. Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen*, 501, and Wünsch, *Die Bergpredigt bei Luther*, especially 97-138. <sup>244</sup> Page 536.

<sup>245</sup> Page 255, note 4. The reply to Troeltsch on this point continues to p. 287.

<sup>246</sup> Z. T. K., 1928, Heft 3. Note that Troeltsch himself says (501 f.) that Luther tended to tone down the conflict. <sup>247</sup> End. 3, 280.51 f., January 17, 1522.

<sup>248</sup> E. A. 19, 203; cf. W. A. 19, 583.31 f.

If any one hears a Jew mention the name of God, he "should report it to the magistrate or throw *Säudreck* on him; and let no one be merciful or kind in this, for God's honor is involved."<sup>249</sup>

You say that I am not merciful in this [his attitude to the peasants]. I answer, mercy is neither here nor there. We're talking about God's Word.<sup>250</sup>

Don't talk to me about love and friendship where one wishes to break with the Word or faith.<sup>251</sup>

'Love your enemies.' Yes, but God's enemies must be my enemies.<sup>252</sup>

This is the sort of thing which justifies Troeltsch<sup>253</sup> in saying that Luther subordinated the Sermon on the Mount to the decalogue, but he is not right in discovering a change between 1523 and 1532. These sayings began in 1520.<sup>254</sup>

Nevertheless Müller is perfectly right that for Luther the magistrate was not at liberty to "wade through slaughter to a throne and shut the gates of mercy on mankind." He should exercise moderation rather than strict justice,<sup>255</sup> and err on the side of mercy.<sup>256</sup> His subjects are not his property like swine or dogs, which God has given him to do with as he likes.<sup>257</sup> In war the women are not to be raped, and mercy should be shown to the vanquished.<sup>258</sup>

But Holl, too, is right that as a rule the entire ethic is brought under the Sermon on the Mount. Luther, to be sure, was never quite so naïve as Farel, who regarded the burning of Servetus as an exemplification of the Golden Rule. A few days before the execution he wrote:

I should count myself worthy of any punishment if I had at all fallen away from the faith and doctrine of Christ. Now I cannot well feel for others more than I have resolved for myself.<sup>259</sup>

Without going so far Luther could talk about "a kindly, a fatherly and brotherly anger," of being unmerciful out of great

<sup>249</sup> E. A. 32, 253, 1543.

<sup>250</sup> W. A. 18, 386.13-14, 1525.

<sup>251</sup> E. A. 19, 269, 1532.

<sup>252</sup> W. A. 32, 400.21-22, 1530-32.

<sup>253</sup> Page 494.

<sup>254</sup> The following passages deal specifically with the Sermon on the Mount: W. A. 6, 267.11 f., 1520; W. A. 18, 387.9, 1525; W. A. 19, 595.25, 1526; W. A. 32, 400.21-22, 1530-32.

<sup>255</sup> W. A. 19, 631.25, 1526.

<sup>256</sup> W. A. 51, 206.12 f., 1534-35.

<sup>257</sup> W. A. 31, I, 194.32, 1530.

<sup>258</sup> W. A. 11, 277.20-23, 1523.

<sup>259</sup> Calvin's opera, XIV, 613.



mercy.<sup>260</sup> "It is the highest charity to resist impiety."<sup>261</sup> The magistrate in the exercise of his office is actuated by no personal rancor.

The godly judge is distressed by the condemnation of the guilty and is truly sorry for the death which justice brings upon them. Here is apparently a work of wrath and unmercifulness, but so truly good is meekness that it abides even in such wrathful works and wells up most powerfully in hearts just when it must be angry and severe.<sup>262</sup>

The executioner may say to God,

Dear Lord, I kill a man unwillingly, for in Thy sight I am no more godly than he, but since it is Thy will and command that public offenders be punished for the preservation of the peace, I am certain and sure that I do right.<sup>263</sup>

Luther, as a minister, felt under obligation to curse the papists, but

we should be heartily glad could we save them from their blindness and the power of the devil at the cost of our body and life.<sup>264</sup>

This goes distinctly beyond the impersonal attitude, yet Luther spares himself the inner difficulties involved in ripping up the bowels of the enemy and loving him at the same time.

A commoner harmonization is to say that severity to the few is mercy to the many. The many may be the culprits who are cowed by a few drastic examples. Referring to the peasants Luther said,

If my advice had been taken at first when the insurrection began, and one or a hundred peasants had been beheaded, . . . many thousands might have been restrained who now have had to die. . . . That would have been a great mercy with a little wrath.<sup>265</sup>

Or again, the many may be the weak who need protection. The Christian, who has no need of the sword for himself, uses it for others to maintain the peace, restrain the bad, and protect the weak.<sup>266</sup> He cannot help making a few widows and orphans in order to save all from that condition.<sup>267</sup> This severity to the

<sup>260</sup> Passages collected by Wünsch, 112-113.

<sup>261</sup> End. 3, 281.87 f., January 17, 1522.

<sup>262</sup> W. A. 6, 267.21-26, 1520.

<sup>263</sup> W. A. 16, 474.25-29, 1524-27; cf. W. A. 19, 595-596, 1526.

<sup>264</sup> W. A. 32, 399.11-28, 1530-32.

<sup>265</sup> W. A. 18, 393.26-32, 1525.

<sup>266</sup> W. A. 11, 253-254, 1523.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. 277.11-15.

few for the sake of the many is commonly justified by the comparison with the amputation of a rotten limb.<sup>268</sup> There is no pretence of any love for the rotten member.

When a good surgeon cuts off a putrified hand or foot or ear or eye to save the body, if one looks at the member that is cut off he seems to be a cruel and merciless man, but if one considers the body which he desires thereby to save, one finds that in truth he is a fine true man, and that he has done a good Christian deed. . . . [So] in the soldier's office one must not consider how it kills, burns, smites, and seizes, etc. That's what the narrow, simple, childish eyes do, which see no further than that the doctor has cut off a hand or foot and do not observe that he has done it to save the body. So one must look on the office of war and the sword with the eyes of a man.<sup>269</sup>

Very much grown-up eyes indeed were needed to look without flinching upon all that Luther laid before them, when he wrote:

We must treat the Jews as does the doctor who burns flesh, veins, bones, and marrow. So must we burn their synagogues . . . make them work, and treat them with severity, as Moses did in the wilderness, when he smote three thousand dead that the whole mass might not be corrupted.<sup>270</sup>

As a final illustration of Luther's conservation of the Sermon on the Mount take this. Christ said that we should not be angry, but rather long-suffering and meek.

Yes, but we cannot be meek against God's honor and command. It is written of Moses that he was the meekest man on earth, but nevertheless when the Jews prayed to the golden calf and angered God, Moses struck many of them dead and thus reconciled God again.<sup>271</sup>

God's honor! If only Luther could have forgotten that! The most ingenious harmonizations are not likely to eliminate the dualism in a system of ethics based upon a dualism in theology. The problem of severity and mercy in the magistrate is entirely parallel to the antagonism, which we have already noted, of wrath and love in God. Holl points this out, but contends that both dualisms are resolved in an ultimate love.<sup>272</sup> But it is the sort of love which merits the name only by paradox. Castellio wondered what Calvin's Christ had left

<sup>268</sup> W. A. 18, 392.26-28.

<sup>269</sup> W. A. 19, 625.26 f., 1526.

<sup>270</sup> E. A. 32, 259.

<sup>271</sup> W. A. 6, 267.10-15, 27 f., 1520.

<sup>272</sup> Page 283. Kühn, too, recognizes the significance of this dualism, but lays greater stress on the exacting character of the *revelation* of the love of God in Christ, which tolerates no gospel beside itself and must be accepted if one is to escape God's wrath (95 f.).

for the devil. Luther could not have dispensed with so distinguished an adversary to lend dignity to his controversies, but his devil must have wished that the Lord would not do every thing himself, for Luther wrote:

It is a trifle for him to massacre a lot of peasants, when he drowned the whole world with a flood, and wiped out Sodom with fire. He is an almighty and frightful God.<sup>273</sup>

On account of idolatry he often wiped out a whole race and city, land and people, kingdom and empire.<sup>274</sup>

Holl says that Luther was not aware of the similarity here between the ethical and the theological problem, but though Luther did not compare the two dualisms, he did not hesitate to take the divine severity as a model for the human.

The hand which carries the sword and kills [he wrote] is no longer the hand of man but God's hand, and it is not a man but God who hangs, racks, beheads, kills, and makes war.<sup>275</sup>

The magistrate cannot use a foxtail. If he is not sufficiently severe, God will interfere to destroy whole cities.<sup>276</sup>

Well might Luther have exclaimed, "Lieber Gott! how narrowly I am pressed! Do you expect me to be more consistent than God?"

<sup>273</sup> W. A. 18, 302.9-11, 1525.

<sup>274</sup> W. A. 28, 699.16 f., November 21, 1529.

<sup>275</sup> W. A. 19, 626.25-27.

<sup>276</sup> E. A.<sup>2</sup> 2, 49, cf. W. A. 18, 36.28-32, and 15, 774.





# AS TO THE CANONIZATION OF MATTHEW

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NEW TESTAMENT critics have waited more than half a century for an explanation of the following strange ending of a Syriac writing of the fifth century after Christ, first published by William Wright in *The Journal of Sacred Literature* for April 1866. We quote from his translation in that journal for October of the same year:

But Joseph and Mary, when they saw the treachery of king Herod and the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, arose and took the Child, and went to a foreign country and of a barbarous tongue; and there they dwelt for the space of four years, during which Herod continued to reign after (their flight). And at the commencement of the reign of Herod's son, they arose and went up from that land to the country of Galilee, Joseph and Mary, and our Lord along with them, and the five sons of Hannah (Anna), the first wife of Joseph. But Mary and our Lord were dwelling together in the house in which Mary received the Annunciation from the holy Angel.

and eleven, in the second year of the coming of our Saviour, in the consulship of Caesar and of Capito, in the month of the latter Kanun, these Magi came from the East and worshipped our Lord at Bethlehem of the kings. And in the year four hundred and thirty (A.D. 119), in the reign of Hadrianus Caesar, in the consulship of Severus and of Fulgus, in the episcopate of Xystus, bishop of the city of Rome, this concern arose in (the minds of) men acquainted with the Holy Books; and through the pains of the great men in various places this history was sought for and found, and written in the tongue of those who took this care.

Here ends the Discourse on the Star, which was composed by Mar Eusebius of Caesarea.

A series of critics, beginning with Nestle (*Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 1893) and Hilgenfeld (*ibid.* 1895), continued by Zahn (*Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, § 54, note 5), Belser ('Zur Evangelienfrage,' *Theologische Quartalschrift*, vol. 80, 1898, pp. 177-239), and the present writer (*Introduction to the New Testament*, 1900, p. 39), and extending among others to Harnack (*Chronologie*, II, p. 126, and *The Date of Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*, 1911, p. 134, note) and Streeter (*The Four Gospels*, 1925, p. 525), have

expressed the conviction that this group of synchronisms is not likely to have been composed *ad hoc* by the writer of the Syriac legend, and that, if it could be traced to its real origin, data of importance might be obtained bearing on the history of the canonization of our First Gospel.

This general conclusion, in which all concur, has principal value to Streeter, because he brings into connection with it the very great influence we must surely ascribe to Ignatius, the earliest writer of whom we can certainly say that he uses our Gospel of Matthew. Ignatius, Streeter urges, cannot fail to have brought the knowledge of the matter to Rome, where he perished as the most distinguished martyr of the age about A.D. 115.

Contrary to the emphatic statement of Harnack<sup>1</sup> that "as the place of origin of the First Gospel Palestine alone can come into consideration," Streeter believes the Gospel of Matthew to be of Antiochian origin, and he supports this view by the fact that Ignatius appears to be first to employ it (not, however, to the exclusion of other records even of uncanonical rank).

Since Streeter's employment of the Syriac legend is the most recent, and the conclusion drawn by him the most pregnant, it will not be amiss to state the case in his own words:

It may have been a little, but not much later [than its appearance at Ephesus], that the first copy of Matthew reached Rome; but it does not follow that it was at once accepted there. Matthew challenged comparison, not only with the old Gospel of Mark, but with Luke, which . . . was already established there. . . . . But Matthew conflicts with Luke at several points, most conspicuously in the matter of the Genealogy of our Lord and — if we are inclined to regard the omission of Lk. i. 34 in *b* to be original — in its affirmation of a Virgin Birth. Unless, then, the new arrival could substantiate its claim to Apostolic, and therefore to superior, authority, it must have been regarded as a book inaccurate on important points, and only the more to be suspected if without warrant it was ascribed to an Apostle.

In the above extract clauses implying that this gospel when brought to Rome was already ascribed to the Apostle Matthew have been omitted. Papias does make the ascription of a gospel to Matthew. Indeed in his time it appears to be already accepted belief. But Papias supports his statement by no

<sup>1</sup> Date of Acts, p. 135.

authority. Streeter (with many others) assumes that Papias is here quoting "the Elder" (ob. 117?), but of this we have no evidence whatever. On the contrary, the use made of the gospel by Ignatius is far from exclusive, or such as we should expect if he thought it apostolic, while even Papias prefers to its account of the fate of Judas an apocryphal story inconsistent with it. Hence Streeter's early dating of the "claim to apostolic authority" made on behalf of Matthew cannot be substantiated. On the other hand, the claim had been not only made but admitted when Papias wrote, and Streeter does well to point out that any attempt to put forward at Rome, where both Mark and Luke were already in circulation, narratives like those of the magi and the star, or the virgin birth, traditions which Ignatius elaborates far beyond Matthew,<sup>2</sup> would be likely to call forth local opposition. We may therefore date this conflict, if it occurred, between Ignatius (115) and Papias (140).

As to the likelihood of the conflict occurring, we need only take note of the complaint of Claudius Apollinaris, successor of Papias in the see of Hierapolis in Phrygia, uttered half a century later than the coming of Ignatius to Rome, to see that the discrepancy as to the date of the passion between "Matthew" (so the newly imported gospel is explicitly called by Apollinaris) and John, the gospel locally current, could lead there also to similar conflict. Asiatic practice in the observance of Easter was quartodeciman, which has the support of John only among the gospels. Apollinaris had some method of harmonization, the nature of which can only be conjectured but which to his mind removed the discrepancy. But obviously those "ignorant and quarrelsome" members of his diocese who refused to follow him in this and by their interpretation "made the gospels conflict," found it less easy. The datings of John are not really reconcilable with those of the Syrian gospel whose authority had been rated so high by Papias, Apollinaris' predecessor. We may infer that at this date (ca. 167) the new arrival in Phrygia, although baptized into the name of 'Matthew' and clothed with apostolic authority by episcopal sanc-

<sup>2</sup> See Ignatius, Eph. 18 and 19, and below, p. 171.

tion, had not yet overcome the opposition of long-established ritual practice. If, then, in Phrygia as late as 167 the Matthean dating of the passion had not yet succeeded in establishing itself against the Johannine, we may well believe that as early as 115-120 controversy would surely be provoked at Rome by the promulgation of doctrines such as those of Matthew, chap. 1-2, and Ignatius, Eph. 18-19, whether or not the gospel on the authority of which they were advanced claimed apostolic authority. The arrival, not of the Gospel of Matthew alone (which may well have had some currency at Rome even before 115), but of this gospel plus the influential martyr Ignatius with his ardent advocacy of the story of the star of the magi and the virgin birth<sup>3</sup> is quite enough to account for the holding of a synod at Rome in 119-120 corresponding to those held in later times *de recipiendis libris*. As regards the possibility of such a synod as the Syriac legend alleges, nothing, then, can be objected. Under this supposition, on the contrary, it is less difficult to explain the subsequent eclipse of Mark and the decline in influence of Luke. For to Basilides in Alexandria (ca. 135), no less than to Marcion in Rome (140), Luke had been 'the gospel' par éminence. The fact is that from about 120 until the appearance in general circulation of the Fourth Gospel (ca. 170-180) Matthew enjoys a position of undisputed primacy, and this fact is easily explained if Matthew received the endorsement of a synod of "men acquainted with the holy Scriptures" in Rome about A.D. 120.

As the next succeeding paragraph of Streeter's volume shows, this scholar no longer hesitates to conjecture that such a conclave actually took place at Rome at the date specified. His language is as follows:

There exists in Syriac a treatise, wrongly ascribed to Eusebius, entitled "As to the Star: Showing how and by what Means the Magi knew the Star, and that Joseph did not take Mary as his Wife." This describes a conference at Rome on the subject of its title, which is elaborately dated by four separate synchronisms as occurring during the episcopate of Xystus [Sixtus I] in A.D. 119. The contents of the document have no claim to be considered historical, but Harnack and others think it probable that the date at least is authentic. I hazard the conjecture that it is the date of a conference at which

<sup>3</sup> See the citation below, p. 171.



the Roman Church accepted the First Gospel as Apostolic on the testimony of representatives of the Church of Antioch. The martyrdom of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in the Coliseum was then an event of recent memory. His letter to the Roman Church, which became, as Lightfoot shows, a kind of martyr's handbook, had attracted great attention; his enthusiastic admiration of the Roman Church, his emphasis on ecclesiastical discipline, based on obedience to the Bishop, as a safeguard against heresy, would have specially commended the Church of Antioch and its traditions to the consideration of the authorities of Rome. Once a favourable hearing was secured for the tradition of Apostolic authorship, the Gospel on its merits would seem worthy of an Apostle. At any rate, by the time of Justin Martyr, the Gospel of Matthew, alongside that of Mark and Luke, is firmly established as one of the accepted Gospels of the Roman Church.

Considering the admitted importance of the Syriac synchronisms it may seem strange that the task of tracing their origin has never been attempted. Now that Streeter has taken the plunge at which others had long hesitated, it is surely time for such an investigation; for while pedigrees of the literary sort are not easy to trace, the data for a determination of this particular question do actually exist, and by means similar to those by which textual critics trace the history of a given variant up to its earliest appearance in the text we can learn something as to both the nearer and the remoter ancestry of the synchronisms embodied in the Syriac legend.

Wright, the original publisher of the Syriac manuscript, regarded it on palaeographical evidence as belonging to the sixth century. He assigned as a probable date for the composition of the work "about 400," and the evidence we shall adduce will show that he was not far from the truth. The ascription to Eusebius of Caesarea, author of the *World Chronicle* which recorded data such as the Syriac writer employs for the succession of the kings of Assyria and Persia with their Hebrew contemporaries from the time of Balak and Balaam, is of course a mere guess of some transcriber. The guess was plausible, for Eusebius' *Chronicle* has much in common with the general purpose of our writer, who operates with three themes of absorbing interest for the period of the chronographers (3rd-5th century) to which he belongs. He is intent on showing (1) the correspondence of biblical history, as accepted by the church in his time, with the secular records of the past; (2) the complete accuracy and trustworthiness of the Gospel of Mat-

thew in its account of the nativity and infancy; (3) the perpetual virginity of Mary. In the present condition of the manuscript sixteen or seventeen lines, together with the remainder of the quire, or quires, originally devoted to this third interest, have been purposely erased; but the title of the work and the remaining introductory paragraph throw considerable light on the contents of the missing section. For the rest, the successions of the kings of the East and the chronological data are not wholly consistent with the Chronicle of Eusebius, so that the guess as to authorship, while plausible, is incorrect, and was recognized as fallacious by the scholars first consulted.

Scholars of our own time will naturally desire first of all the judgment of Burkitt, which we are glad to be able to cite from a letter of August 5, 1928, as follows:

As for Ps-Euseb. *On the Star* I quite agree with Nöldeke (letter to W. Wright, dated 21 May, 1866) that it is a Syriac original, though no doubt indebted to Eusebius' *Chronicle*. Several works of Epiphanius were translated into Syriac, or at least extracts from them, so that he may after all have got this or that from Epiphanius.

But it is important to observe that not only 17 lines [text p. 19, transl. p. 164] are missing near the end, but also one or two whole quires, so that the last paragraph (which contains the mention of Caesar and Capito Coss.) is separated from what goes before by a great gap.

Beyond the important confirmation, based on personal study of the document, that it is indeed "a Syriac original" of the fourth or fifth century, Burkitt has little light to shed upon our problem. His general impression will nevertheless be welcomed. On the broad question of the types of ecclesiastical chronology current in the fourth and fifth centuries, Burkitt continues as follows:

The native Syriac tradition seems to me to have got the Gospel years wrong. On the one hand they maintained that the Sunday of Pentecost was June 4, *i.e.*, that the year of the Crucifixion was 341 AG (*Anno Graecorum*) = 30 A.D., Sunday letter A; on the other they said the Nativity was 309 AG = Rufus et Rubellinus Coss. (whereas Fufius et Rubellius = 29 A.D. on which year 4 June is a Saturday). That is, the local Syriac tradition (*Doctrine of the App.* and *Edessene Canons, Martyrdom of Barsamya*) has got the consuls affixed to the wrong *Anno Graec.*

This note showing the independence of the consular date in Syriac chronology from the date by the Seleucid (or "Greek")

era is doubly interesting because the year A.D. 30 (341 A.G.) is more nearly correct in the judgment of such scholars as J. K. Fotheringham and Zahn than the date 29, adopted (contrary to absolute requirements of modern astronomical calculation) by second-century chronographers operating on the basis of a paschal cycle which overcame the discrepancy between John and the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>4</sup>

But to return to our Syriac document. The writer uses the Peshitta version of the Old and New Testaments, so that its date cannot be earlier than ca. 400, as proposed by Wright. His sources and interests alike make it highly probable that he is writing under the influence of Epiphanius, whose early composition on the perpetual virginity of Mary was originally addressed to the Syriac-speaking region ("the Arabians" in the latter half of the fourth century would include North Syrians), and is now extant in the Panarion as Haer. lviii. How much of Epiphanius' tedious and verbose denunciation of those who, on the basis of Matt. 1, 20, held that Joseph did "take Mary as his wife" (a thoroughly characteristic composition of the great heresy-hunter of the fourth century) was originally incorporated in the portion now eliminated from the Syriac manuscript it is of course impossible to say. However, the lines immediately preceding the erasure are sufficient to prove the influence we allege. Since the paragraph is important on many accounts, we may cite it again from Wright's translation:

<sup>4</sup> See Zahn, *Kommentar, Apostelgeschichte*, Bd. II, 1921, Exc. V, p. 866 and O. Gerhardt, *Datum der Kreuzigung*, 1911. The astronomical argument is best presented by J. K. Fotheringham in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1910. Turner (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. 'Chronology of N.T.') shows convincingly how this date of A.D. 29 for the passion (the year of the "two Gemini") became dominant. Unfortunately Turner adopts A.D. 29 as historically correct. Astronomical reckoning shows it to be impossible, for Turner's assumption that at this date the fixation ('sanctification') of the new moon of Nisan was made by the Sanhedrin otherwise than by actual observation is disproved by documentary evidence. It is true, as Sir W. M. Ramsay states (*Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* 1898, p. 213) that "the original Christian calculation which ultimately gave rise to the modern era of the nativity . . . was wrongly calculated as early as the second century." The work of the chronographers began, indeed, ca. A.D. 144, with the earliest attempts to reach agreement in the centuries-long paschal controversy, but it did not begin with the nativity but with the attempt to date the passion in relation to the Jewish passover. And the year fixed upon was A.D. 29 (for harmonistic reasons) instead of 30, as modern calculation requires.

But Joseph and Mary, when they saw the treachery of king Herod and the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, arose and took the Child, and went to a foreign country and of a barbarous tongue; and there they dwelt for the space of four (*sic*) years, during which Herod continued to reign after (their flight). And at the commencement of the reign of Herod's son, they arose and went up from that land to the country of Galilee, Joseph and Mary and our Lord along with them, and the five sons of Hannah (Anna), the first wife of Joseph. But Mary and our Lord were dwelling together in the house in which Mary received the Annunciation from the holy Angel.

The last sentence (the only one in which the Syriac writer pays any attention to the Lukan form of the story) is that which we must first consider. Obviously it formed the beginning of that portion of the writing (now eliminated) which undertook to show that "Joseph did not take Mary as his wife." Joseph, who has brought up from Egypt not only Mary and her child but five other sons by Anna his "first wife," now takes up his residence with them in Nazareth, while Mary with her child takes up her separate residence in the house (also in Nazareth) where she had received the Annunciation (Lk. 1, 26 f.). This corresponds to the theory of Epiphanius. It forms part of his elaborate demonstration against "certain other of the Greek philosophers" (he specifies "Porphyry and Celsus and Philosabbatius") of the complete harmony and entire accuracy of Matthew and Luke (Haer. li. 8 f.). The objectors had asked how it was possible that on the single day of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (which they assumed to be that of the coming of the magi) all the events should have taken place which, as related by Luke, would extend over full forty days (compare Lk. 2, 21-39 with Lev. 12, 4). Epiphanius replies that the coming of the magi was exactly two years after the nativity. At the end of the first year Joseph returned to Bethlehem with Mary from his home in Nazareth "as it were to commemorate the events which had taken place there." At the end of the second year he again returned, on these occasions finding plenty of room because all who had assembled in Bethlehem by reason of the census of Augustus had now dispersed. Hence the magi, conducted by the star "to the place where the young child was" (Mt. 2, 9), found him "no longer in a manger, no longer in a cave," but in a "house." For Mt. 2, 11 says specifically, "came into *the house* and saw the young child with



Mary his mother." It follows, according to Epiphanius, that Joseph had provided this "house" for Mary and the Lord at Bethlehem, and (as may be assumed from his vehement insistence on the perpetual virginity) he would have provided similarly in Nazareth. Our Syriac writer naturally infers that the house thus occupied by "Mary and our Lord" to the exclusion of Joseph was the same in which Mary "received the annunciation from the holy angel."

We have been led to see that it is not merely the general doctrine of Epiphanius which has influenced the Syriac writer but more particularly Epiphanius' refutation of the objectors to the inconsistency of Matthew and Luke. For the objections seem to have been directed especially against the chronological discrepancies between the two evangelists in their opening chapters. Analysis of Haer. li., the famous polemic of Epiphanius against the objectors to the Fourth Gospel (whom he punningly designates 'Alogi'), soon discloses that his refutation is in fact a complete treatise on the harmony of the gospels. Moreover, it not only demonstrably rests on Hippolytus' defence of the Johannine writings against Caius of Rome, making its chief point an argument for reconciliation of the chronology of John with that of the Synoptists, but even goes back of these second-century objectors referred to by Irenaeus (Haer. iii. 11, 9). The beginning of its apologetic deals with objections raised by Celsus and others to the conflict of Matthew with Luke, the particular issue being the chronology of the early chapters. Indeed, quite apart from the abundant proofs that Epiphanius is borrowing the whole substance of his refutation from Hippolytus, as has been repeatedly shown since Lipsius (*Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*, 1865), it would be easy to show that the whole mass of chronological data which occupies so disproportionate a share of Haer. li. is taken (as with most of the chronographies of the period) directly or indirectly from the great World Chronicles of Hippolytus and his older contemporary, Julius Africanus of Emmaus-Nicopolis in Palestine.

For Hippolytus was by no means the first to endeavor to rewrite the pagan history of the world on a biblical basis. Africanus, shortly before Hippolytus' time of writing, had

brought the history down from the creation (5,500 years before the nativity) to A.M. 5723 = A.D. 221. Both chronographers started from the crucifixion and resurrection in the "year of the two Gemini" (A.D. 29), allowing one year only for the public ministry and taking the thirty years of Lk. 3, 23 as substantially exact. Africanus' date for the nativity thus came to be 2 B.C., or the "fortieth year of Augustus," a date which Epiphanius admits to be also current in his time, but which he accounts for as due to accidental omission of the number "two" (Haer. li. 29, 1). The interest of Africanus in the harmonization of Matthew and Luke is attested by his letter to Aristides, of which considerable portions are given in Eusebius' Church History, i. 7, as well as in his letter to Stephanus (Quaest. iv). This dealt with the alleged discrepancy between the genealogies, which Africanus reconciled by the theory of levirate marriages. Africanus' World Chronicle was the avowed basis for the similar work of Eusebius. As Salmon remarks: <sup>5</sup>

Before the time of Africanus the Christian Apologists had been forced to engage in some chronological discussions in order to remove the heathen contempt for Christianity as a novelty by demonstrating the great antiquity of the Jewish system, out of which the Christian sprang.

In point of fact, the outline of Africanus' World Chronicle and much of its material can be traced back to Theophilus of Antioch (180-185), the reputed author of a harmony of the gospels, whose Letter to Autolycus (3, 21) deals with the same subject. From Theophilus we pass backward to the most noted of all the harmonists, Tatian (ca. 170), whose Address to the Greeks (31-39), manifests the same apologetic interest; for it is largely given up to a demonstration of the superiority of biblical history and chronology to the records of the Grecian world. Finally, with Basilides (ca. 130), whose attempted chronology based on the Gospel of Luke is mentioned by Clement (Strom. i. 21), we reach a period practically contemporary with the reported synod at Rome. Obviously the subject of biblical chronology, *with special reference to the reconciliation of Matthew and Luke in their accounts of the nativity*, was not left quiescent

<sup>5</sup> Dictionary of Christian Biography, I, s.v. 'Africanus,' p. 56.

during the second and third centuries. It might even be possible, if occasion warranted, to trace back the particular line of descent of the *series regum*, successions and consulships, of our Syriac document through the maze of chronographers and world chronicles to its own sources and derivation. Our present concern, however, is limited to the particular group of synchronisms which by their datings according to Roman consulships, the reigns of Roman emperors, and the episcopates of Roman bishops, show clearly their western derivation.

As yet we have established no more than a reasonable probability that in the first researches of Hippolytus into the difficult province of chronology, he, like his predecessors, was led by a desire to prove the *harmony of Matthew with Luke* against Jewish and pagan objectors, for Origen also tells us that Celsus brought arguments to bear against the story of the magi and the star (*Contra Celsum* i. 40). We know that Hippolytus used this type of harmonization against Caius in defence of the Johannine writings, and can form a fairly definite idea of its outline by comparing Epiphanius with the chapter (iii. 24) in Eusebius' *Church History* which purports to be devoted to 'The Order of the Gospels' but really takes up (perhaps from the *Dialogue of Priscus and Gaius*, perhaps from Hippolytus) a defence of the chronological statements of the Fourth Gospel. At all events it is known that the researches of Hippolytus into the history of humanity began at a very early period of his long career, and that in his chronology the one fixed date was that of the crucifixion and resurrection, reckoned as the year of "the two Gemini" (Rufus and Rubellius Geminus), A.D. 29. The famous cycle, by which Hippolytus believed it possible to determine the occurrence of passover since the creation, broke down within his own lifetime, but the task of gospel harmonization, so dear to the great chronographer, remained to torment the church. With it, however, remained also, as one foundation of a structure not to be shaken for many centuries, the conviction that at least the crucifixion could be dated by the Roman system of consulships as having taken place in A.D. 29. The nativity was therefore dated (Lk. 3, 23) "about" thirty years before, for in Hippolytus' time the ministry was still reckoned

(in spite of the three passovers mentioned in John) as covering but a single year.

For Epiphanius, as for the other chronographers who took up the task of Africanus, Hippolytus, and Eusebius in the hope of finding a more satisfactory solution for the problems of gospel harmonization, the year of the two Gemini remains a fixed point. But Epiphanius, though he too clings to the year of the two Gemini, is explicit and emphatic in insisting upon *two* years for the public ministry, a year of acceptance (Lk. 4, 19) and a year of opposition. He thus met the data of John, while also insisting on the data of Matthew. He takes Matthew to imply that the nativity fell two years (exactly) before the coming of the magi, and therefore during the reign of Herod. In addition he calls for two years more as the interval between the coming of the magi and the death of Herod, when Joseph returned from Egypt, having received angelic notification of Herod's death, and learning of the accession of Archelaus shortly after. This does better justice to Matthew's dating of the nativity several years before the death of Herod than does Hippolytus' firm retention of the thirty years of Lk. 3, 23, but it requires drastic revision of the consular list. For this, however, Epiphanius is fully prepared. He employs, as Mommsen has shown,<sup>6</sup> a list of consuls closely connected with the so-called *Consularia Constantinopolitana*. This was employed also by Hydatius in Spain and by the *Chronicon Paschale*. Epiphanius begins with the nativity "in the consulship of Augustus XIII and Silanus in the forty-second year of Augustus' reign," enumerates the successive consuls for thirty years, Silanus and Nerva being those of the thirtieth, and ends triumphantly, "You see that the interval is of thirty years." With enormous pedantry of pretended exactitude he establishes the eighth hour of the fifth day of January as the precise date of the nativity and of the appearance of the star to the magi in the East. This, he tells us, was the thirty-third year of Herod's reign, the magi making him their visit in his thirty-fifth year, and his death occurring in the thirty-seventh. Thus, by reckoning back thirty consulships to the baptism of Jesus, which he avers took place

<sup>6</sup> *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, auct. ant., IX, 218.



on November 8 of the year preceding the beginning of the public ministry, sixty days before the miracle of Cana, wrought at the exact day and hour of Jesus' birth thirty years before, he is able to insert the necessary additional year for the "acceptable year" of the ministry which preceded the year of rejection and crucifixion.

Silanus and Nerva took office in A.D. 28, just before Epiphanius' date for the "beginning of miracles" at Cana, so that the following consulship of the two Gemini (A.D. 29) would have been the year of rejection. The difficulty that in John 7-12 the ministry extends over this whole year plus three months of the year following is met in the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* and the *Chronicon Paschale*, both representing the "consular lists" which Epiphanius declares he is following, by the ingenious device of splitting the year into two, the year of the "two Gemini" as the first and that of "Rufus and Rubellius" as the second. An exactly similar device serves to make good the accidental omission by all three witnesses of Lamius and Servilius Nonnius, consuls for the year A.D. 4. The two Sexti and Pompeius Magnus-Apuleius (A.D. 14) are distributed between the years A.D. 15 and 16, with a consulship of "the two Sexti" (15) and a consulship of "Pompeius Magnus and Apuleius" (16). Epiphanius appears to be personally responsible for the second duplication; for while his authority, the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, splits the preceding consulate into a consulship of Silanus and Nerva plus a consulate "duobus Silanis," Epiphanius, instead, explains in detail (li. 23, 5; 25, 7 f.) that the consulship of the two Gemini was followed by another of Rufus and Rubellius. In this he is followed by *Chronicon Paschale*. His aim is to prove the perfect accuracy of Luke in stating that Jesus at his baptism, two months before he had attained the age of thirty, was "about" thirty years of age. He does not follow the reckoning of Eusebius, but another (probably that of Africanus), which placed the nativity in 2 B.C., the "beginning" of the ministry in November, A.D. 28, and the passion in April, A.D. 30.

This was highly acceptable for the harmonization of John with Luke. It was admissible for Matthew, if the Matthean

requirements were placed at the minimum. But the consular lists fared badly, and Josephus came off worst of all.

In one other respect Epiphanius seems to have permitted himself one of his famous conjectural emendations. For his eighth consulship (A.D. 5) he gives "Caesar and Capito," whereas the two other authorities who employ the same list give the same names (correctly) for the year A.D. 12, although *Chronicon Paschale* has them in both places, and the authorities for Epiphanius differ in their readings. Germanicus Caesar and C. Fonteius Capito were in fact the consuls for the year A.D. 12. How, then, does Epiphanius come to assign them to A.D. 5? The explanation is simple. C. Ateius Capito was in fact promoted (in Tacitus' opinion because of servility to Augustus) to be consul suffectus in the year 5 with Lepidus and Arruntius as his predecessors in the office since January 1. But in the famous *Chronography* of A.D. 354, which Mommsen carefully traced to its origin in that of A.D. 234, representing nothing less than the *World Chronicle* of Hippolytus himself, it is distinctly noted: "In the consulate of this man [*hoc consule*, not, as further down, *his consulibus*] the Lord Jesus Christ was born on the eighth of the kalends of January (Dec. 25) on Friday the fifteenth day of the lunation." By "this man," however, is not meant Germanicus, but Lucius Caesar, and his associate in the office was not Capito, but Paulus. The year is A.D. 1, so that the entry, by whomsoever made, represents exactly the era of Dionysius Exiguus ultimately adopted by the Roman Church. How, then, does Epiphanius come to make the strange transposition?

Manifestly the answer lies in the confusion of Lucius Caesar with Germanicus Caesar, and C. Fonteius Capito with C. Ateius Capito. Epiphanius omits entirely the consulship of C. Fonteius Capito, evidently taking it to be a mistake, and inserts as the date for the accession of Archelaus<sup>7</sup> a consulship of "Caesar and Capito" to take the place of the comment (which to Epiphanius would be erroneous) after "Caesar and Paulus" stating

<sup>7</sup> *Chronicon Paschale* interjects the comment after this consulate (Καῖσαρ καὶ Καπίτων): 'Ιουδαίων βασιλεῖα Αὔγουστος Ἀρχέλαον Ἡρώδου παῖδα καθίστησιν τετράρχας δι' ἀποδείκνυσιν Ἡρώδην τὸν καὶ Ἀντίπαν καὶ Λυσανίαν καὶ Φίλιππον, Ἀρχελάου ἀδελφούς.

that this consulship was that of the nativity. The correction makes confusion worse confounded. In reality for the Hippolytean chronology, which reckoned a public ministry of only one year and three months, dating the nativity thirty years before the passion in A.D. 29,<sup>8</sup> the consulship of Caesar and Paulus was substantially correct.

But, to return from the attempted corrections of Epiphanius to his sources, it is important for our purpose to note what Mommsen calls "the proof (*Nachweis*) that the chronographer of 354 has incorporated in his collection the chronicle of Hippolytus of Portus, together with its continuation in Latin translation down to 334." We may also note, on the same unrivalled authority, that the catalogue of regal successions employed by the chronographer of 354 reappears in the *series regum* of the Armenian version of Eusebius' Chronicle, including a list of kings from Agrippa II, last king of the Jews, based on a chronicle of A.D. 194, which included the kings of "Persia and Egypt." Finally, note the general statement that "this Chronography of A.D. 354 soon after its composition came into general use and was transcribed in many forms." It is hardly needful to add that the synchronisms of the Syriac legend of the magi and the star, belonging to this same period of the industrious dissemination of world chronicles of the style of that of Eusebius, form part of this fifth-century development. We have seen that its interest in Epiphanius' doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and its coincidence with Epiphanius' sources for its chronological defence of Matthew (though with departures from his chronology), are sufficient to prove an influence from this quarter. It still remains to be seen whether its chronological data can be traced any more closely to their origin, in particular whether there is any reason to suppose that its account of a synod at Rome ca. A.D. 120, occupied with the question of the admissibility of the Matthean story of the infancy, has a possible basis in fact.

We may note first of all that the group of synchronisms con-

<sup>8</sup> Chronography of A.D. 354: "A generatione Christi usque ad passionem anni XXX, et a passione usque ad hunc annum qui est XIII imp. Alexandri (A.D. 234) CCVI.

sists not of four, as commonly represented, but of five. For while the numeral of the hundreds with which the fragment begins has been erased, together with the preceding sixteen or seventeen lines found objectionable by some early owner of the manuscript, there can be no possible doubt that a 'three' should be supplied. The writer is dating the nativity by the Seleucid era, placing it with Africanus in (309 A.G.), or according to our reckoning, 2 B.C. His dating of the synod is of course independent of the nativity. He places it in the year 430 A.G., and in the consulship of "Severus and Fulgus." Now it is one of the proofs that he is using the same list of consulships employed by the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* that he gives the names as "Severus and Fulgus," the true names being Severus and Fulvus. *Consularia Constantinopolitana* have likewise "Severus II and Fulgus," and *Chronicon Paschale* Σεvéρου καὶ Φούλκου. But these are not the consuls for A.D. 119, which corresponds to 430 A.G., but of A.D. 120. We also note that he assigns four years to the sojourn in Egypt instead of the two assigned by Epiphanius. As was observed by Nöldeke, we are dealing with no mere translation or transcript, but an original. As we have seen, Epiphanius himself attempts to explain away the older reckoning of the nativity which placed it, as does our author, two years earlier, in the 40th, instead of the 42nd, year of Augustus (see above, p. 160). In short, our Syriac writer does just as we should expect from one of his age and locality. For his datings by numbered years he uses the Seleucid Era precisely as does the *Chronicon Edessenum* composed in Edessa about A.D. 550. This also begins its datings in 311 B.C., placing the nativity in 309 (= 2 B.C.). Its relations with Rome are indicated by its very exact dating for the outbreak of the heresy of Marcion in A.D. 138.

So far not much fault can be found with our author's chronology. But what of the extraordinary statement which follows, dating the nativity "in the month of the latter Kanun (January) in the consulship of Caesar and of Capito" (A.D. 12)? Obviously this should be 'Caesar and Paulus', just as we found explicitly noted after this consulship of A.D. 1 in the *Chronography* of A.D. 354: "hoc consule dominus Jesus Christus natus



est VIII kal. Jan. d. ven. luna XV." How, then, if not through the perverse influence of Epiphanius, does this come to be disfigured into "Caesar and Capito"? Correcting to '(L.) Caesare et Paulo' we find ourselves again in the atmosphere of Rome and the Hippolytean chronology. Our author agrees with the later Roman modification of Hippolytus in dating the nativity in A.D. 1.

But we have still to consider the synchronisms which after all are most vital to our inquiry, the group of four giving as the date of the Roman synod on the question of the magi and the star "the reign of Hadrian (117-138), in the consulship of Severus and Fulgus (*sic*), in the episcopate of Xystus, in the (Seleucid) year 430."

The critics are clearly right who maintain that it is unsupposable that a Syriac writer of the fifth century could have independently framed these four coincident synchronisms, with no error worse than a miscalculation of one year and the slight misspelling of the name Fulvus. We need not, we cannot, doubt that he had as a basis some authentic Roman chronology. But we are confronted with an *embarras de richesse*. The difficulty is rather with the great mass of chronologies and world chronicles, all aiming to bring the biblical data into harmony with secular datings, which branched in various directions from the great chronological undertakings of Africanus and Hippolytus. However, we have already seen that our author aims to improve upon Epiphanius, and that he employs consular lists common to Epiphanius and later chronographers of the fifth century. The real question is whether any of these, back to Hippolytus himself, can be imagined concocting four synchronisms for the purpose of dating a Roman synod de recipiendis libris.

Of Epiphanius this might be imagined, because Epiphanius is deeply concerned in the opening pages of his treatise on the Alogi with vindicating the chronology of Matthew against certain second- and third-century aspersions. He names only Celsus, who, in fact, scoffed at the story of the magi, Porphyry, who threw ridicule on the discrepancy between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, and Philosabbatius, of whom nothing

whatever is known, but whose name suggests a connection with those Jewish assailants of the gospel records on whom Celsus acknowledged dependence. But we look in vain in Epiphanius for any trace of the alleged synod.

What, then, of the post-hippolytean chroniclers, whose inter-connection has been so carefully traced by Mommsen in his article (*Abhandlungen of the Leipzig Academy*, 1850, vol. I, ph. Cl., pp. 549-693) entitled 'Ueber den Chronographen vom Jahre 354,' and subsequently in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, auct. antiquissimi, vol. IX, pp. 197-247? Some things of value to our inquiry can certainly be learned from Mommsen. Thus (p. 610 of the first-named article) we are told that "the World Chronicle of Hippolytus, which was employed and transcribed down to a very late period, principally in Italy and France — only the author's name seems to have soon passed into oblivion — will have been employed widely in the Occident in the appropriate form which the annalist of 334 had given it and his successor of the year 354 had continued down to his own date." Concerning this continuation of the work of Hippolytus, whose ending is marked by the sentence already quoted, to the effect that from the passion down to "this year, which is the thirteenth of the Emperor Alexander (Severus), are 206 years," we also learn that it was the continuator of 354 who expanded the original work of Hippolytus by inserting the names of consuls and emperors. Hippolytus had given the succession of bishops of Rome down to Pontianus (231-235) with the duration of their episcopates. The continuator added the names of emperors and the consulates, the latter list being quite inaccurate.

It would probably be possible, by comparing the lists of kings of Assyria "from the days of Moses to Cyrus the Persian" and of kings of the Persians from Cyrus to "Pirshbur, who was called Zmrns," the contemporary of Augustus, under whom the star appeared, to determine with greater or less precision which one of the fourth- or fifth-century world chronicles our Syriac author was following. The fact that his synchronisms are based on the reigns of the Roman emperors, the bishops of Rome, and the Roman consulships, makes it practically certain that the

Hippolytean chronography is fundamental. Only, none of its continuators, so far as the present writer's information extends, makes any reference to a synod held at Rome under Bishop Sixtus in the reign of Hadrian. Nor has any of them a motive for mentioning such a synod if it actually was held. We are left to choose between two possibilities: either (1) the Syriac writer fixed upon this date as an appropriate one for the purely fictitious holding of a council at Rome guaranteeing the reliability of his own account of the magi and the star, and concocted the synchronisms from some of these post-hippolytean chroniclers; or else (2) Hippolytus himself furnished the suggestion and the essential data, our author thus deriving them, directly or indirectly, from Hippolytus.

Of the two possibilities the second is on the whole the more probable, partly because no reason appears in the Syriac legend for the location of the synod at Rome and the ascription of the guarantee to Roman authorities, partly because no reason appears for dating it one hundred and nineteen years after the event supposed to be guaranteed. On the other hand, the date of the consulship of Severus and Fulvus (A.D. 120) is exactly as we should expect if, as Streeter supposes, the arrival of the Syrian gospel, followed by the martyrdom of its supporter Ignatius in 115, resulted in Rome (as later at Laodicea) in a questioning of its authority when brought into comparison with the gospels already in circulation among the western churches. Moreover, there is some reason to believe that the Roman synod whose decisions are reflected in the authoritative utterances of the Muratorianum (ca. 180) was not the first of its kind.

A letter from Harnack dated July 17, 1928, has the following pertinent comment, for even Harnack admits that hitherto all his efforts to determine background and setting for our Syriac document have been fruitless:

Das 'Muratorianum' ist das älteste constitutum de libris recipiendis das wir besitzen; aber ich habe in dem Artikel über das Muratorianum (in *Zts. f. ntl. Wiss.* xxiv [1925], pp. 1-16) gezeigt, dass sein Verfasser die *Marcionitischen Prologe* zu den Paulusbriefen gekannt hat; denn er sagt, die Briefe declariren selbst, *quae, a quo loco, et qua ex causa* sie geschrieben seien. Aber das tun sie *nicht*, wohl aber sagen es die Marcionitischen Prologe, die der Verfasser also las, wie wenn sie selbst Theile der Briefe wären.

But while the Muratorianum is "the oldest constitutum de recipiendis libris that we possess," we are fortunately not without evidence of other conciliar decisions of the same region and period. In chapter 10 of his treatise *De pudicitia*, addressed by Tertullian early in the third century to the bishop of Rome, the African father declares the Shepherd of Hermas to have been pronounced "false and apocryphal" by "every assembly of your churches" (*ab omni concilio ecclesiarum vestrarum*). Councils of local churches de recipiendis libris were therefore no new thing to Rome in Tertullian's day. Can we imagine the memory of such an assembly surviving the full century from Sixtus I to Hippolytus? At least the Muratorianum itself implies official action of this nature. The Marcionite prologues to the Pauline Epistles, if really appealed to as Harnack maintains, cannot have become actually fused with the text current in the "Catholic" church without some sort of authorization from orthodox quarters. Moreover, the writer, as Harnack shows in the article referred to, is undeniably appealing to official usage in the list of books which he draws up, the public reading of which in the church is or is not permitted. Not only so, but the opinion of the minority is also given. Some in the church object to the (public) reading of the Revelation of John (or perhaps only the Revelation of Peter). Others still wish to hear the reading of the Shepherd of Hermas. On these questions action had already been taken, because a decision was unavoidable. From the moment that writings claiming to give an authoritative "message of the Spirit to the churches" began to demand a public hearing, an answer, favorable or unfavorable, had to be given. And the answer would reflect the views of such "men acquainted with the holy books" as the local church could muster.

We have seen that our Syriac writer of the fifth century derives certain elements of his story directly or indirectly from Hippolytus. This is probably through Epiphanius, who draws from Hippolytus most of the material for his treatise against the Alogi. Moreover, the earlier paragraphs of this treatise are devoted to the refutation of pagan, or Jewish and pagan, scoffs at the disagreement of the early chapters of Matthew and Luke



and carry us far back toward the earliest days of gospel harmonization. But the Syriac writer is attempting more than a mere harmonization of Matthew and Luke. He is also operating with very ancient Syrian legend, partly based on pre-Christian mythology. His chief aim is to vindicate the Matthean story of the magi and the star, but he by no means limits himself to the canonical version. Like Ignatius before him he has much to tell of the effects upon the heavenly powers of the appearance of the star, which he identifies with that predicted by Balaam (Num. 24, 17):

In the days of this Pirshbur, who was called Zmrns, there appeared the Star, both transformed in its aspect and also conspicuous by its rays, and terrible and grand in the glorious extent of its light. And it overpowered by its aspect all the stars that were in the heavens, as it inclined to the depth to teach that its Lord had come down to the depth, and ascended again to the height of its nature to show that its Lord was God in his nature.

We may compare with this the attempt of Ignatius to combine the teaching of Paul in 1 Cor. 1, 20; 2, 8 with Syrian legend on the epiphany of the star in his letter to the Ephesian church (Ignatius, Eph. 18-19):

Where is the wise? Where is the disputer? Where is the boasting of them that are called understanding? For our god, Jesus the Christ, was produced in the womb of Mary from the seed of David according to a dispensation but (really) of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 1, 3 f.); who was born and was baptized in order that by his passion he might purify the water. And hidden from the prince of this world was the virginity of Mary and her bearing of the child, likewise the death of the Lord, three mysteries to be cried aloud which were accomplished in the silence of God. How then were they manifested to the Aeons? A star shone forth in the heavens above all the stars, and its light was unutterable and its strangeness caused amazement; and all the rest of the constellations with the sun and moon formed themselves into a chorus about the star; but the star itself far outshone them all; and there was perplexity to know whence came this strange appearance which was so unlike them. From that time forward every sorcery and every spell was dissolved, the ignorance of wickedness vanished away, the ancient kingdom was pulled down, when God appeared in the likeness of man unto newness of everlasting life, and that which had been perfected in the counsels of God began to take effect. Thence all things were perturbed because the abolishing of death was taken in hand.

Should we then infer that the Syriac writer is resting on Ignatius? The resemblance hardly warrants the supposition of any literary relation. On the other hand it cannot be denied

that the fifth-century Syriac writer is still occupied with themes which we have found to be in active controversy both in Syria and Rome from the middle of the second century. Our Syriac writer is something more than a transcriber. He borrows not from one chronographer only but from several, combining their data in an attempt to prove the historical trustworthiness of Matthew. Disregarding the chronologies derived from Africanus and Hippolytus, both of whom make the chronology of Luke fundamental and reckon back "thirty years" from A.D. 29 for the nativity, the Syriac writer boldly accepts the implications of Matthew, leaving Luke's statements to be adjusted to this chronology as best they can. The nativity is dated six years (!) before the death of Herod in better accord than Luke with the results of modern inquiry.<sup>9</sup> It is true that the visit of the magi, which by plain implication of Mt. 2, 16 took place some two years after the nativity, is dated by our author in 311 (A.G.) (1 A.D.). But this only means that the Syriac writer took the current dating (Chronicon Edessenum) of the nativity in 2 B.C., adjusting to it his date for the death of Herod in spite of Josephus' very precise dating of the same event in 4 B.C. Whether the "four" years assigned for the stay in Egypt are based on some chronography such as the comment of *Chronicon Paschale* after the consulate of "Caesar and Capito" (above, p. 164) or are merely assumed from the narrative, it would be difficult to say. Of the motive there can be no dispute. The writer aims so to connect the Matthean narrative of the magi and the star with biblical and secular history as to demonstrate the miraculous fulfilment of messianic expectations aroused in the East as well as in Israel by Balaam's prophecy of the star.

For this purpose the legend-writer has drawn upon the world chronicles of his time, whether oriental or western in their derivation. In some one of them he found a group of synchronisms dating a synod at Rome ca. A.D. 120 and adapted it to his purpose. He declares that the synod guaranteed the authenticity of his own story of the magi and the star. Had he himself invented the statement, the form given to it and the date as-

<sup>9</sup> See W. M. Ramsay, *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* 1898, where a date 9-8 B.C. is shown to be probable.

signed would probably not be by Roman bishoprics and consulates. It is more probable that through Hippolytus or some of the continuators of the Hippolytean chronography a lingering echo has come down of the disputes occasioned at Rome early in the second century by the discrepancies between the gospels of Luke and Matthew. For some sort of decision would be called for from church leaders such as Clement and Grapte, whom Hermas appeals to at a time when the arrival and martyrdom of Ignatius gave added weight to the strange story of the nativity related in the gospel newly arrived from the East. The conjecture for which Streeter at last assumes responsibility involves nothing incredible. The particular line of descent of the synchronisms grouped in support of the reported synod may never be exactly determined. Nevertheless, the extraordinary dominance accorded to Matthew from about this date, and the undisputed acceptance of its certainly unwarranted claim to apostolic authorship, remain to be explained. In the absence of any other explanation, that of a synod of "men acquainted with the holy books," assembled at Rome about A.D. 120 to determine whether the new doctrines of the star of the magi and the virgin birth might or might not be received, remains the most probable. At all events, the decision in favor of the work which contained them, howsoever and whensoever made, was fraught with momentous consequences for the church.





## NOTES

### THE SERÂBÎT INSCRIPTIONS

Shortly after the publication of my study on the Inscription of Solomon <sup>1</sup> I learned of the new Canaanite inscriptions recently brought from Sinai by Professors Lake and Blake and published by them and Professor Butin in the *HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW* for January, 1928. Having attempted several years ago, in the *Revue Archéologique* (1921 and 1922), to explain the earlier ones, I naturally wished to see if I might not read these also and get at their meaning. In this I think I have succeeded, at least to a moderate degree. The first steps in deciphering the ten or twelve documents discovered at Serâbît, near Sinai, were taken by the English scholars A. H. Gardiner and A. Cowley. The former identified the name of Bahalath, the latter that of Tanit, as well as the pronoun אֲנִי (Hebrew אֲנִי 'I') and especially the expression עַל נְעָם, which means 'because of favor.' Several other words, including בֶּן 'son,' נָתַן 'give,' were recognized within a short time, so that a goodly number of the twenty-two letters of the alphabet were thus identified.

When I learned of these results and had the opportunity to see a complete photograph <sup>2</sup> of the most important of these inscriptions (that on the statue), which consists of three lines, running from the top down, from left to right, and from the bottom up, it seemed clear to me that this inscription should be read as follows:

עַל נְעָמָת | לְבַעֲלַת | עֵתֶר מִנָּה לֹא

and that it means: 'Because of favors, to Bahalath Hathor, from the person [represented] here' [that is, the individual on whose breast the words are engraved]. It is an *ex-voto*.

I attempted also to interpret some other more difficult texts, and while I do not flatter myself that I have always succeeded, yet it can be confidently affirmed that the forms of most of the letters of the Sinaitic alphabet are now known, and that the language of these inscriptions is almost identical with ancient Hebrew.<sup>3</sup>

The latest documents to be published confirm these conclusions and supplement them with several new facts, as we shall see.

<sup>1</sup> L'Inscription du Jardin de Salomon transcrite et expliquée, Montauban, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> R. Eisler, *Die Kenitischen Weihinschriften*, 1919, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Revue archéologique*, 1921 and 1922.

## I

There are three of the new inscriptions. The first is fairly easy to read and interpret, but this is not the case with the others.

*Inscription No. 356.* The first inscription has been well transcribed by Professor Butin, with the exception of the first letter, which looks to him like a *shin*, while the photograph shows clearly an ox-head with its two horns (that is, an *aleph* 'ox'), and the sign for 'two' (which he takes for a *zayin* with the transverse line effaced). Here are the text and the translation:

אן תען בבנ  
לן בעלת

'Oh! That Bahalath would favor us  
with two children!'

I consider the first word identical with the exclamation preserved in Psalm 118, 25. The second is the optative feminine from ענה 'hear,' 'favor.' 'Favor with' is equivalent to 'grant.' The rest does not need explanation. Most of the letters of this inscription are accompanied by a dot, which may indicate the direction of the writing. This is not found in the others.

*Inscription No. 357.* The second text is more difficult. It consists also of two lines, the first of which, to be read from above down, has been transcribed correctly, but not the second, which runs from left to right. The two lines should, in my opinion, be transcribed as follows:

אנוש נן ?טם לאב במן  
דמעו מר נר לן

'Protect a sick man . . ? . . unclean, to a father nine times<sup>4</sup>, his tears are bitter. [May] light [be] to us [through his recovery]!'

'Us' undoubtedly means the family of the sick man including the man himself whose recovery is prayed for.

We still have to explain the unknown sign indicated here by an interrogation mark. The sign is a small fish pierced from side to side. It is not evident what letter this could represent, nor what meaning a single letter in the middle of the text could have. The figure must be an ideogram. Now according to Plutarch and Horapollo the fish was in Egypt the symbol of hate (that which is odious) or of horror.<sup>5</sup> We

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gen. 31, 7 and 41.

<sup>5</sup> Sottas and Drioton, Introduction à l'étude des hiéroglyphes, pp. 71 (note 10), 81 (No. 44), 88, etc.

are justified then in translating: 'Protect a sick man, an unclean horror [horrible disease] is to a father,' etc.: that is, 'A father of nine children has a horrible disease.' Was it leprosy? The perforation of the fish probably indicates that it is dead and already decomposing; hence the idea of horror.

*Inscription No. 358.* The third text is even more obscure, but for a quite different reason. Though some of the letters are certain, the others differ more or less from the ordinary forms, and one of the signs seems, like the fish, not to be a letter at all. It is the head and neck of a serpent. Fortunately the first four letters, beginning at the right at the bottom, are certain, and make a word which may be a participle *piel* (or *hiphil*): מלעב. This participle needs a subject, which might be the serpent. Next comes another ב, followed by two letters which resemble ה and ז. בזח 'with an arrow.' Since לעב signifies *illusit, jocatus est*, and appears to be the original of the Greek λῶβη 'injury,' λωβάομαι 'injure,' 'ill-treat,' these words may mean: 'May a serpent wound with a sting;' and since the second line has only three letters, which are undoubtedly להג, meaning 'greedy appetite,' this may supply the direct object which the transitive verb 'wound' requires: 'May it strike the greedy' or 'the covetous.' The sign for 'three' follows, undoubtedly signifying 'three times.'

Thus these latest inscriptions have given us several new words, all capable of being explained by Hebrew or Canaanite.

I need not repeat that I by no means present all these conjectures as certain. They seem to me the most likely, or rather the least unlikely, of those that have occurred to me. But whatever may be thought about them, it is none the less certain that these ancient documents have preserved for us a much more primitive form of the alphabet than any known through other similar Semitic inscriptions, even the oldest, such as the epitaph of Aḥiram.

The last of the new inscriptions even gives us some knowledge of an already developed and simplified form of the same alphabet which bears some resemblance to that of the inscription of Solomon at Jerusalem. The last two also show that in the early stages, in addition to the twenty-two letters, a picture of an object was sometimes used, either to designate the object <sup>6</sup> or to express an abstract idea. This double usage, familiar to us in Egyptian writing, does not appear to have come from the region of Sinai, but it was still in use there when

<sup>6</sup> There is a two-fold instance of this use in one of the previous inscriptions, No. 350: "We see here a figure of a man and a long leaf, which seem to me to signify 'man and plant'" (Revue archéologique, 1921).

the original forms of several letters had become appreciably altered, as we have seen. It shows also the influences under which the alphabet was formed, about 1800 B.C.

## II

It is not my intention to discuss here the readings and interpretations which Professor Butin has proposed for the previously known Sinaitic inscriptions; but it is only right to remark that at least for one of them he has given a more complete and accurate facsimile, which enables me to correct and complete the interpretation that I suggested for it several years ago, in the *Revue Archéologique*.

1. No. 352 is cut on two fragments which fit together very well. One would naturally suppose, therefore, that the letters of one part are the continuation of those of the other part; but with an inaccurate transcription, taken from a not very distinct photograph, I did not see that this was possible. With Professor Butin's photograph, however, reading from right to left, we find, at the side of a representation of a tree, the following words:

רתן ז עשא  
שמ  
בטשו ׀

This may mean: 'He who had made desolate this juniper tree has extended it.' For this result it is only necessary to consider the verb עשא as identical with the Hebrew עשה. The next word needs no explanation. I formerly interpreted the last word<sup>7</sup> on the mistaken supposition that it was an imperative. It seems to me now much more likely that it is a perfect and the following *waw* a pronominal suffix. The inscription is therefore not a prayer, as I had thought, but rather an *ex-voto*, like many others.

Professor Butin has also shown that at the right of the figure there are two more letters than I was able to read, probably a *he* and a *nun*, that is, הן 'behold.' Hence the meaning is: 'Behold, it has spread out thickly.'<sup>8</sup> This seems to me to show clearly that the figure is a tree and not a fish.

2. From the resemblance of the two texts, No. 351 should undoubtedly be translated in the same way: 'When the sun smote, he preserved this man's crops.' The subject is the god whose figure is seen

<sup>7</sup> *Revue archéologique*, 1921.

<sup>8</sup> *Revue archéologique*, 1922, 'Rectifications.'



beside the inscription.<sup>9</sup> This was therefore an ex-voto and not a prayer, and the attitude of the worshipper is expressive of thankfulness.

3. Finally, thanks to a better reading, I should translate the beginning of No. 353 a little differently, reading:

זת בקב משן הבעלת  
אננו

This would mean: 'This one, in the second chamber of Bahalath, the secret one.' משן may be identified with the Hebrew משנה. What follows is extremely difficult to read.

### III

1. The table of alphabets which precedes the article in the HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW for January 1928 seems to me incorrect in regard to five letters of the Sinaitic alphabet. *Daleth* had the triangular form at that time, as in more recent inscriptions. I have noted two examples at the beginning of the inscription of the sphinx, where I read 'Dodo-habbahalath.' We have a third instance in the second of the new inscriptions, at the beginning of the second line. See above.

*Heth* also probably had the ordinary archaic form. I think I recognize it in the word חתה 'in the place of,' at the end of the second line of No. 353. But I admit that the end of this line is difficult to read with any certainty.<sup>10</sup>

The form of *pe* ('mouth') is learned from the reading of the end of the principal inscription: מנה לו 'of the person of this man.' It readily explains the forms that come later. See *Revue Archéologique*, 1928, p. 158.

*Resh* ('head') was certainly represented by a human head, more or less accurately drawn. There are two new examples of it in the second of the new inscriptions. See above.

As to *samekh*, I have not found any example of this letter, either in the texts previously known or in the new ones. I do not see where or in what Semitic word it is at all likely to appear.

<sup>9</sup> *Revue archéologique*, 1921.

<sup>10</sup> *Heth* and *he* in the last inscription have only two parallel lines, instead of three, but this simplification was not lasting. We find it in *he*, it is true, in the inscription of Solomon, where *gimel* also has the rounded form, as in the last of the Sinai inscriptions.

I may add that in No. 352 and in the second of the new inscriptions (line 1) *teth* is formed of a *taw* above an *ayin*; but it may occur in other places at the side.

2. The new documents confirm the conclusions which I reached from study of the earlier ones and which were published in the *Revue Archéologique* in 1921. But they supply some further details that are of value. Thus the form of *resh* was already known from the words רב 'chief,' beside the figure of a man; בערת עתר; רתן (Heb. רתם) beside the figure of a tree, 'this juniper' (not 'broom'). It is of course a human head, as the name indicates. But why is it sometimes cut in two by a line almost from top to bottom? The second of the new inscriptions makes this quite clear. Here this letter is found twice in the form of a female head in profile, where this line separates the face from the hair. In the first instance it is preceded by a *mem*; מר ('bitter') is in turn preceded by the word רמעו, which means 'his weeping,' or 'his tears,' speaking of a sick man. In the second instance which occurs immediately after the first, *resh* is preceded by a *nun*, נר 'light,' and it is followed by לן, 'to us.' Hence, 'May light be to us!' (through the recovery of this sick man). This new inscription therefore confirms the earlier ones on three points of some importance.<sup>11</sup> Similarly *daleth* is here represented by a triangle that is very nearly isosceles and more clearly so than in the inscription of the sphinx.

The third inscription has a slightly different form for *gimel*, which is here curved; for *he* and *heth*, which have only two transverse lines instead of three; and for *šade*. The same peculiarities in *gimel* and in *he* are found in the inscription of Solomon at Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> Just as the inscription of the statue has preserved the most ancient form of ב and of ה, this inscription with the perforated fish has preserved that of ר. These must be among the earliest forms.

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## PAUL AND ONESIMUS

Recent investigations into the law of fugitives and suppliants in hellenistic Egypt, a law which was based upon the procedure of classic Greece and so was generally like hellenistic law throughout the east, have thrown much light upon the subject, and suggest a reconsideration of the case, of Onesimus and his relations with Paul and Philemon.<sup>1</sup> According to the law of Athens a slave whose life was in danger might flee to an altar and claim sanctuary. The first altar available was frequently the hearth of some private family, with its associations of the family religion. If a refugee rushed into the house and claimed sanctuary, the householder was under legal obligations to give him protection, at least temporarily, while following one of two possible courses. Either he must reconcile the slave to going back to the master, probably by giving the wretch some assurance that the master's wrath was mollified, or, if the slave persisted in refusing to trust himself with the master, the householder was obliged to put the slave up for sale in the market, and pay to the slave's owner the price received. The latter alternative was fraught with serious possibilities for the slave, since in a sale of this kind the circumstances would prejudice prospective buyers against him, and he would probably be purchased only for the roughest sort of service, such as the galleys or the mines. Rather than face such an uncertainty the slave would certainly be glad to go back to the first master if there were any reasonable hope of clemency.<sup>2</sup>

The custom of binding the householder to care for fugitive slaves in this manner was carried over into Egypt by Ptolemaic law, and probably was universally observed in Paul's day in the eastern part of the empire, since it later impressed itself upon Ulpian's legislation.<sup>3</sup> So frequently did slaves resort to this refuge that altars were built along the street outside the houses to keep such invaders from intruding upon the bosom of the family.<sup>4</sup> Even the Jews had to adapt themselves to the situation. Philo, in complete contradiction to Jewish custom, speaks of the family hearth as a sacred place to the Jews, at which such fugitives could find legal refuge. He says:

<sup>1</sup> See especially Friedrich von Woess, *Das Asylwesen Ägyptens in der Ptolemäerzeit und die spätere Entwicklung*, Munich, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Lipsius, *Das Attische Recht und Rechtsverfahren*, Leipzig, 1905-1915, pp. 643, 128, n. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Woess, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75 ff., 86 ff.



If a third-generation slave of another man, says Moses, because of the threats of his master, or because of his consciousness of some offences [which he has committed], or in case he has done nothing wrong but is only subject to a savage and harsh master, shall in terror flee to thee to get thy help, do not reject him. For to deliver up a suppliant is not pious, and even a slave is a suppliant when he flees to thy hearth as to a temple, where he ought rightly to have asylum either until he be brought into open and complete reconciliation [with his master], or until, failing that, as a last resort he be sold. For the consequences of any change of masters are of course, uncertain, but an uncertain evil is better than a certain one.<sup>5</sup>

Philo's ascription of this law to Moses is a reference to Deuteronomy 23, 16, but the law as he quotes it is the Greek law, and the Jewish phrases which he uses merely cover the fact that he is borrowing a foreign law for Jewish use.<sup>6</sup> I know of no parallel evidence for Asia Minor, where the incident of Onesimus' flight seems to have occurred,<sup>7</sup> but behind the entire transaction this same Greek procedure is clearly implied. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, was detected in defrauding his Christian master, or was convinced that he would soon be detected. He made his escape, and had time to reach Paul, to whom he fled with shrewd consideration of the great respect in which Philemon held the Apostle. Where Paul was at the time we do not know. Because he speaks of himself as *δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ* it is traditional to say that he must have been writing as a prisoner either at Rome or at Caesarea,<sup>8</sup> though no positive evidence points to either place. On the contrary Paul must have been at liberty, else he could not have offered to go bond for Onesimus' peculations, for such a bond while he was a prisoner at either place would have been worthless. It is also strange that Paul could have entertained a fugitive slave during either of these imprisonments. But the letter implies that he is not in captivity, for he writes that he expects soon to be at liberty (from engagements?) so as to visit Philemon, and he has such immediate anticipation of arrival that he asks Philemon to arrange at

<sup>5</sup> De Virtutibus, 124.

<sup>6</sup> I comment on this law more at length in my forthcoming book, *The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt at the Time of the Early Roman Empire as described by Philo Judaeus*.

<sup>7</sup> It is traditional to identify the Onesimus of this letter with the Onesimus of Colossians 4, 9, "the faithful and beloved brother who is one of you." In view of the commonness of the name this identification is not at all certain, and if it is rejected, all geographical data for the incident are lacking. In that case we could only say that since all the names of Philemon and his family are Greek, the Greek law would presumably have been the one by which they would have acted.

<sup>8</sup> M. R. Vincent, *International Critical Commentary*, Philemon, pp. 160 f., marshals the conclusions of scholars and the arguments for each view.



once for his accommodation, a request which would have been an absurdity if written from either Rome or Caesarea. As a matter of fact, there seems to me no more reason for taking the expression *δέσμιος Χριστοῦ* literally than Paul's other favorite *δοῦλος Χριστοῦ*, while the plain implication of the epistle itself is that Paul was free, and somewhere in the neighborhood.<sup>9</sup>

Paul, in accordance with the law, allowed this shrewd and peculating slave to remain with him for a time, for how long we cannot guess. In any case it was long enough for Onesimus to become converted to Christianity. Under the circumstances this conversion may well have been made quickly; for the pressing need of Onesimus was somehow to get himself reinstated with his master, otherwise, even if he escaped prosecution for theft, he had the horrible alternative of being sold under a cloud. Having embraced Christianity, however, Onesimus could persuade Paul that he was a changed man, and could move Paul to write in all sincerity his letter to Philemon, appealing to Philemon's Christian spirit to forego his wrath against an individual who, while formerly a thieving slave, was now a brother in Christ. Even so Paul had to go bond for the lost money. With this appeal and assurance Onesimus dared to go back to Philemon, and, if we may judge from the reference to Onesimus in Colossians 4, 9, he remained thereafter in good repute as a Christian. He would hardly have dared to do otherwise.

<sup>9</sup> If the reference to bonds is to be taken literally, it would appear that the imprisonment was much more probably one of the frequent and less serious detentions which Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 11, 23. The Ephesian imprisonment proposed by Deissmann would fit into the picture sketched by the epistle very nicely. See *Light from the Ancient East*, 1927, pp. 237 ff.

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